

BIG BANG. Vendors sell firecrackers on Quezon Avenue in Legazpi City to greet the New Year.

NINO JESUS ORBETA/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

Benazir Bhutto dies in suicide bombing

Bounty for killer of Lintuan now P1M

By Joselle dR. Badilla
and Dennis Jay C. Santos
Inquirer Mindanao

DAVAO CITY—THE BOUNTY on the head of the killer of broadcaster Ferdie Lintuan was increased to P1 million yesterday after Rep. Prospero Nograles pledged an additional P500,000.

Earlier, Mayor Rodrigo Duterte offered P500,000 in an effort to speed up the investigation of the Dec. 24 murder of Lintuan.

Lintuan, 52, was shot by a man riding behind another on a motorcycle as he drove home from radio station dxGO.

Lintuan had discussed on his radio program alleged irregularities, including those that attended the construction of the newly opened People's Park here. He had claimed that the trees planted at the park were overpriced.

As the police were conduct-

BOUNTY/A1S



BHUTTO waves to her supporters during a campaign rally in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, moments before she was assassinated on Thursday. AFP

Attacker shoots her, then blows self up

RAWALPINDI, PAKISTAN—PAKISTANI opposition leader Benazir Bhutto was assassinated on Thursday, apparently after being shot and then attacked by a suicide bomber as she left a campaign rally, aides said. Twenty others were also killed.

The death of the charismatic former prime minister threw the campaign for the Jan. 8 election into chaos and created fears of mass protests and an eruption of violence across the volatile South Asian nation.

"She has been martyred," said party official Rehman Malik.

The attacker struck just minutes after Bhutto addressed a rally of thousands of supporters in the garrison city of Rawalpindi.

She was shot in the neck and chest by the attacker who then blew himself up, said Malik, Bhutto's security adviser.

The scene of the bombing was awash in blood.

An Associated Press reporter could see body parts and flesh scattered at the back gate of the Liaquat Bagh park where Bhutto had spoken. He counted about 20 bodies and could see many other wounded people.

Bhutto was rushed to the hospital and taken into emergency surgery.

"At 6:16 p.m. she expired," said Wasif Ali Khan, a member of Bhutto's party who was at Rawalpindi General Hospital.

Bhutto's supporters at the hospital exploded in anger, smashing the glass door at the main entrance of the emergency unit. Others burst into tears. One man with a flag of the Pakistan People's Party tied around his head was beating his chest.

Some at the hospital began chanting, "Killer, killer,

BENAZIR/A1S

Court says Palparan knew of abductions

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE COURT OF APPEALS HAS DIRECTLY linked retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan to the abduction of civilians suspected of being insurgents, saying that he at least knew about the arrest and detention by his men of the Manalo brothers.

The court's second division said this showed Palparan's "command policy" of encouraging the arrest of civilians without due process and sufficient basis.

In the Dec. 26 decision penned by Justice Lucas Bersamin, the court also said other military personnel and members of the Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Unit (Cafgu) were involved in the abduction of farmers Raymond and Reynaldo Manalo in Bulacan and their detention for 18 months.

Reacting to the court ruling, Palparan yesterday said he neither encouraged the abduction of civilians nor detained the Manalo brothers. (*See Palparan's side on Page A15.*)

Palparan, who retired in September 2006, has been tagged a "butcher" by militant groups, which have accused him of involvement in the disappearance or killings of their officers and members.

But President Macapagal-Arroyo

COURT SAYS/A15

BSP warns ATM users vs 'surfers'

By Doris C. Dumla

GETTING MONEY FROM AN AUTOMATED teller machine (ATM) can be a hassle, especially during this holiday season.

Beware particularly of "shoulder surfers" who lurk behind you.

It is also prudent to cup one hand over the keyboard while punching the buttons with the other.

These are some of the things to keep in mind for your own security in conducting business on the ATM, according to a recent advisory issued by the

BSP WARNS/A15

Fired prisons chief claims innocence: Jalosjos fled

By Julie M. Aurelio
and Christine O. Avendaño

THE AXED DIRECTOR OF THE BUREAU of Corrections (BuCor) yesterday disclaimed responsibility for Romeo Jalosjos' unhampered departure from the national penitentiary and subsequent flight to Zamboanga

del Norte on Dec. 22.

In a phone interview, Ricardo Dapat claimed that the convicted child rapist and ex-lawmaker had actually escaped: "Tumakas siya nun. It was not that difficult for him because he was already a living-out prisoner."

Dapat pointed out that he had prevented Jalosjos from leaving the New

Bilibid Prisons (NBP) in Muntinlupa City earlier on the basis of a purported release order.

"Pinigilan natin yan nung Dec. 16. Wala pa talaga yung release order niya," he said.

Asked to confirm the discharge certificate that Jalosjos had shown reporters, he said: "That is not valid. It is

only a xeroxed copy, and the original is still with the BuCor administration [office]."

He said the actual discharge certificate had yet to be issued because he was just about to sign it.

In an interview with the ABS-CBN News Channel, Dapat said the office of

FIRED/A14



Nene slams ethnic slur on Visayans in Judy movie

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A joke, but Visayans are not laughing.

A Mindanao senator yesterday denounced a scene in the Judy Ann Santos starrer "Sakal, Sakali, Saklolo" that suggests Filipinos who speak the Visayan dialect are second-class citizens to the Tagalog.

NENE SLAMS/A15

BRIDGING THE DIGITAL GAP Phone equipment worth \$200M rusting in warehouses

(Second of three parts)

MORE THAN \$200 MILLION WORTH OF equipment is rusting in two warehouses in Metro Manila in the wake of the disastrous Telepono sa Barangay (TSB) project designed to link remote villages with the rest of the country, the INQUIRER has learned.

The government pays the rent for the warehouses, as well as the amortization for loans incurred for the project under the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC).

Sen. Mar Roxas says that in the 2008 national budget, the outlay for foreign loan repayment for the TSB project is P250 million.

Under a martial law decree that remains current to this day, deals with overseas financiers hammered out by the executive branch are not

PHONE/A14



A FARMER in Salug, Zamboanga del Norte, poses in front of a bank of telephones for the multibillion-peso Telepono sa Barangay project. Photo taken on Oct. 1.

Salug folk finally able to say hello to Graham Bell

By Julie S. Alipala
Inquirer Mindanao

SALUG, ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE—This town of about 30,000 people at the edge of the Sulu Sea never got acquainted with Alexander Graham Bell's creation even though it got 92 units of equipment under the government's Telepono sa Barangay project seven years ago.

None of the units worked, for some mysterious reason.

Emilia Fausto, 17, says she was introduced to the contraption only in

SALUG FOLK/A14

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Luzon and Visayas will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. Mindanao will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Batangas	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Partly Cloudy

COMPILED BY: SCHATTI QUODALA, PDI RESEARCH/12/27/07

SOURCE: PAGASA

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Second FRONT PAGE

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EZ2

15 27 | 4 4 4 8 5 |

(In exact order)

Mid-Day SUERTRES Evening

4 3 2 | 5 5 3

SUPERLOTTO 6/49

15 16 19 21 33 36

P42,987,166.20

Lim snubs AFP's 'Pen' probe

Lawyer says it will prejudice rebellion case

By Nikko Dizon

DETAINED ARMY BRIG. GEN. Danilo Lim yesterday refused to participate in a military inquiry into the Peninsula Manila take over, saying it would prejudice his rebellion case pending before a Makati City court.

Speaking through his lawyer, Vicente Verdadero, Lim also questioned his transfer to a detention cell at the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp) in Camp Aguinaldo in violation of a court order transferring him to the Army custodial center in Camp Capinpin, Tanay, Rizal.

"We did not participate in the Provost Marshal's investigation because the subject matter of the investigation is also the subject matter of the criminal case for rebellion in the Makati court... that would unduly prejudice (him)," Verdadero told reporters.

Lim, Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV, and 16 other officers and soldiers are set to be arraigned on



LIM

Jan. 15 in connection with the Manila Pen siege on Nov. 29 where they renewed their call for the ouster of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Verdadero said that "as far as Gen. Lim is concerned, the investigation of the Provost Marshal is terminated."

AFP Provost Marshal, Col. Arthur Abadilla, said Lim had the right not to participate in the military investigation that will determine if the Army general and other officers

and soldiers violated the Articles of War.

However, Abadilla said Lim's non-cooperation would not prevent the Armed Forces from pursuing a case against him.

Wearing civilian clothes and under heavy guard, Lim was brought to the Provost Marshal's Office in Camp Aguinaldo at around 9:30 a.m.

He had spent almost a month at the PNPA jail in Camp Crame and one night in Camp Capinpin, where he was detained before the Manila Pen affair together with Marine officers suspected of plotting a coup d'état in February 2006.

Following the inquiry, Lim was brought to the high-security Isafp compound on orders of AFP chief of staff, Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr.

Abadilla said Lim's detention at the Isafp is for "expediency and (his) security."

Verdadero said he would file the proper motion in court, questioning the transfer of Lim to Isafp.

"We have to uphold the order of the court. It is very clear, under further orders of the court, that he cannot be moved from Tanay," Verdadero said.

movement had been cleared

by the Joint Operation Center at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City.

Caculitan said the group's travel to Marine headquarters in Taguig City had been coordinated with the Philippine National Police at the regional level but, for some reason, the communication failed to reach the PNP provincial office.

Students of the Marine Basic Airborne Course, the soldiers and policemen had completed their ground training in Ternate, Cavite, and were headed to Marine headquarters to prepare for their airborne jumps in Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija, Caculitan said.

Truckloads of soldiers sound alarm for cops

By Nikko Dizon

FEARS OF ANOTHER INCIDENT like the one that rocked the Peninsula Manila hotel last month were apparently on the minds of police in Cavite as they stopped more than 100 Marines and 27 other policemen on the highway in Bacoor town yesterday, suspecting their trip to Metro Manila had not been authorized by the military command.

The Marines and cops were on seven military trucks when Bacoor police stopped them at around 9:50 a.m., Lt. Col. Ariel Caculitan, Philippine Navy spokesperson, said.

Caculitan said the police allowed the troops to proceed after verifying that their

Writ of amparo out for Jonas

By TJ Burgonio

THE COURT OF APPEALS HAS ISSUED A writ of amparo in the case of missing activist Jonas Burgos, a move that is seen as facilitating the seven-month-long search for the young activist in the military camps.

The appellate court granted the writ last Thursday, a day after Edith Burgos filed a petition for amparo to get the military to account for her son's disappearance, the Burgoses' lawyer said.

Interviewed just before a post-Christmas get-together with families of other desaparecidos at the Bantayog ng mga Bayani in Quezon City yesterday, Edith said she was very happy about the grant of the writ.

"It will probably hasten things. That's the source of our relief," she said.

The young Burgos, 37, a son of the late press freedom fighter Jose "Joe" Burgos Jr., has been missing for seven months today.

The appellate court ordered the respondents, led by Armed Forces Chief Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, to file a return, or an official report in response to the writ in five days, said lawyer Ricardo Fernandez.

The other respondents are Army chief Lt. Gen. Alexander Yano, Philippine National Police Director Avelino Razon, and Commission on Human Rights Chair Purification Quisumbing.

The court has set a hearing on the case for Jan. 7 to be presided over by Justice Remedios Hernando of the 7th Division.

'Terrorist' sheik freed

CAIRO—POLICE IN THE PHILIPPINES HAVE freed an Egyptian envoy of Sunni Islam's highest seat of learning held for allegedly plotting a Christmas bomb attack, the institution's grand imam said on Thursday.

Al-Azhar's Sheikh Mohammed Sayyid Tantawi told Egypt's official MENA news agency that Sheikh Mohammed al-Sayyid Ahmed Mussa had been freed into the care of the Egyptian embassy "until all release procedures are completed."

There was no immediate confirmation from the Philippines.

Mussa, identified by Philippine police as Mohamad Sayed, was arrested on Dec. 18 during a raid on a flat in the Majad Islamic School in Cotabato City.

An explosive device fashioned from a 60-millimeter mortar round and ball bearings attached to a timing device were recovered from his room.

Police said the Egyptian was captured after surveillance and that intelligence reports suggested he planned to detonate the bomb at an undisclosed location in the city on Christmas Day.

Among the items they said were recovered from his room was a booklet on the organization of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), a rebel group that has been fighting to set up an Islamic state in the southern Philippines.



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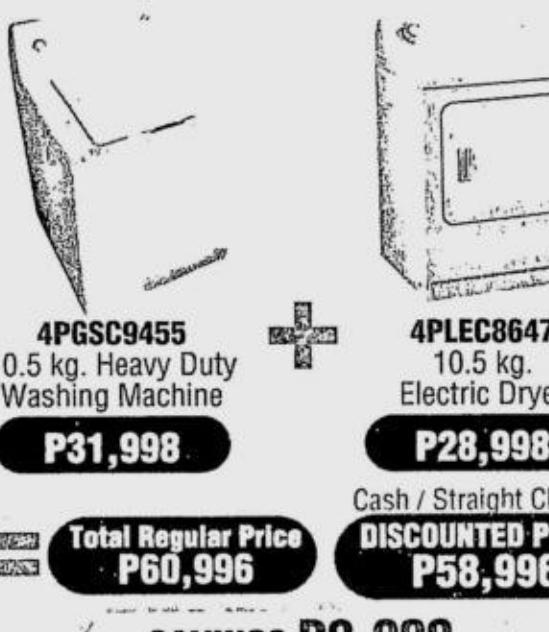
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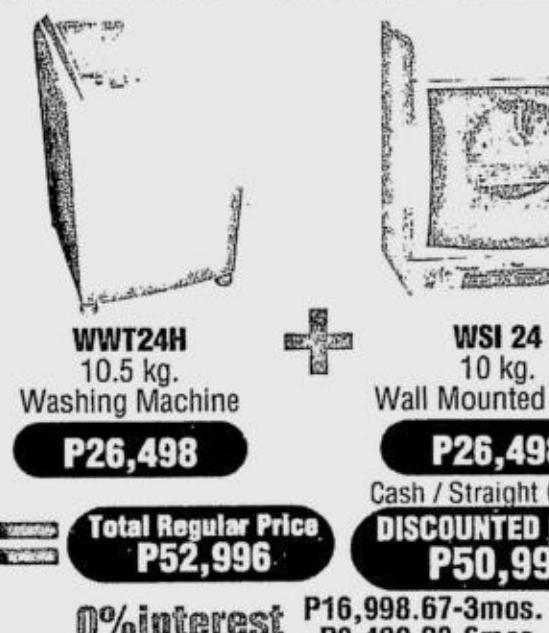
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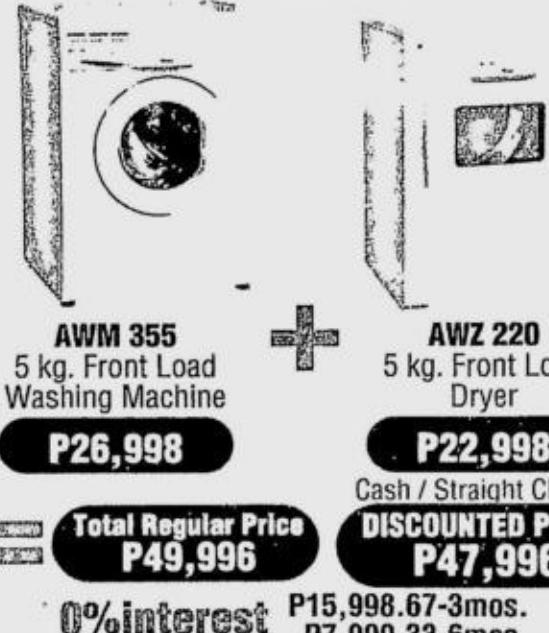
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Feast of the Innocents still relevant today, says Church man

By Beverly T. Natividad

CELEBRATED BY THE CATHOLIC Church on Dec. 28, the Feast of the Holy Innocents commemorates the massacre of babies during Herod's reign as king of Judea.

According to the gospel of Matthew, Herod, feeling threatened by the baby the Magi called "the King of the Jews," ordered all male children in Bethlehem up to two years of age killed in the hope the Christ Child would also be slain.

The Church venerates these children as martyrs, since they "died not only for Christ but in his stead." The Latin

Church instituted the feast sometime in the 4th or 5th century.

Known locally as Niños Inocentes, the feast in today's context is an occasion to remember those innocently suffering injustice, poverty and abuse by those in power, according to Rev. Fr. Ariston L. Sison Jr., director for Media and Social Communication of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Cubao (Quezon City).

In an interview, Sison said the children ordered slaughtered by Herod were sacrificed as "innocent victims" of his lust for power.

"They represent people who innocently suffer for somebody else, for

truth and for justice," he said.

In the present world, stained by selfishness and self-interest, many people are also called to rise to the occasion and share in the sufferings of Christ, he said.

"Christ did not suffer only for Himself but for all of us. He teaches us that His suffering was not useless but that it could save others, and that through it we are able to help others," Sison said.

He said the 55 Higaonon farmers from Sumilao, Bukidnon, who recently marched 1,700 kilometers on Malacañang to ask President

Macapagal-Arroyo to give them back their land, had shown how it is to suffer for a greater cause.

Their act, Sison said, could help others similarly situated.

Sison said in the Church calendar, the day is part of an "octave" when the

Church celebrates different feasts in the eight days following Christmas to commemorate, as well as try to understand, the mystery of Jesus' birth.

"It is as if one day is not enough to understand the mystery of Christ's birth," Sison said. *With Inquirer Research*

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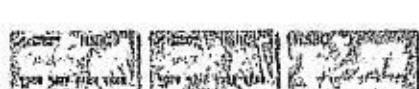
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Fired prisons chief claims innocence

From page A1

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita had known about Jalosjos' Dec. 16 release date as early as June 12.

He said two of his staff members talked to Edwin Enrile, a lawyer at Ermita's office, about the completion of Jalosjos' sentence.

Dapat quoted Enrile as telling him and

his staffers: "Wala na tayong magagawa kung yun ang computation ng bureau. Bas-ta huwag lang lumabas sa media (We can't do anything about it if that's the bureau's computation. Just don't leak it to the media.)"

Malacañang was quick to deny that it had ordered Jalosjos' release. Anthony Golez, deputy spokesperson of President

Macapagal-Arroyo, said he and other Palace officials were at a loss as to why Dapat was "fabricating stories."

Sacrificial lamb

On Wednesday, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez announced that Ms Arroyo had appointed Oscar Calderon, a former chief of the Philippine National Police, to replace Dapat as BuCor director.

Asked by the INQUIRER if he was the "sacrificial lamb" in the case, Dapat said: "Lahat ginawa ko, pero tumakas siya (I did everything but Jalosjos escaped). The perception is that I was relieved because of negligence. Wala akong kasalanan diyan (I am not at fault in this case)."

He said that on the night of Dec. 21, he even ordered some prison guards to check if Jalosjos was at his quarters near the NBP tennis court.

Dapat, whose term as BuCor director lasted only five months, apologized for not taking phone calls from reporters the past week. He explained that he was then still covered by a gag order issued by the Department of Justice.

Asked if he planned to work for the government again, he replied in the negative and said he would return to private life.

But Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz told the INQUIRER that Dapat's immediate subordinates should also be replaced "because it is not possible that the head will be chopped off while the arms and legs remain alive."

Cruz said replacing the other BuCor officials would be a chance for Ms Arroyo to clean up the NBP. He said it was an "open secret" that many prominent inmates enjoyed special privileges.

70 and above

Malacañang has repeatedly said Ms Arroyo's policy was that only prisoners aged 70 and above may be released. Jalosjos turns 70 in 2010.

A political ally of the President, Jalosjos was convicted in 1997 of the statutory rape

of an 11-year-old girl and sentenced to two life terms. In April, his sentence was commuted by Ms Arroyo to 16 years.

He walked out of the NBP on Dec. 16 by virtue of a discharge certificate signed by the NBP head, Supt. Juanito Leopando. Gonzalez subsequently ordered a review of the computation of the convict's remaining time in prison.

Jalosjos' returned to the NBP, heeding the request of Dapat and Leopando to do so while the issue was being resolved.

But he insisted that he was now a free man, and threatened to sue the DOJ if it did not speedily resolve his case and if the government refused to "re-spect the release order."

On Dec. 22, Jalosjos flew to his home province of Zamboanga del Norte. He was rearrested early the next day, and is being held at the San Ramon Penal Colony, some 30 kilometers from Zamboanga City.

'Ministerial' duty

Dapat maintained yesterday that Jalosjos' sentence was to have expired on Dec. 16 based on then BuCor Director Vicente Vinarao's computation.

"My duty is purely ministerial," Dapat told the INQUIRER. "It was the past directors who granted Jalosjos the [living-out] status and the good-conduct time allowance, not I. So the expiration [of his sentence] was really on Dec. 16."

In earlier interviews, Vinarao said he had asked for written guidance from the DOJ regarding Jalosjos' completion of sentence, to no avail.

Dapat said it was not within the BuCor's jurisdiction to resolve the issue of Jalosjos' remaining time in prison, and that it was the DOJ that should resolve the question on the computation.

He also said that had Jalosjos' Dec. 16 release been official, the convict would have been set free the next day, a Monday.

"[The prisoner] would have had to undergo clearance first at the separation center, which does not have office hours on Sundays," Dapat said.

He added that like any other prisoner due for release, Jalosjos would have been made to undergo fingerprinting, documentation and identification, as well as a medical checkup.

'Never'

"The Palace never ordered the release of former Rep. Romeo Jalosjos," Golez said in a statement and in an interview with reporters.

This was echoed by Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Ser-

gio Apostol, who told reporters: "The Palace will not react this way if it was aware of the projected release [of Jalosjos] last Dec. 16."

Apostol said it was a case of sour grapes on Dapat's part: "When you are removed, you keep on blaming [other] people."

Golez issued the reminder that the DOJ was investigating the BuCor's action of releasing Jalosjos, and that the commutation order on the convict would "make him eligible for release at age 70."

Apostol said that according to the justice secretary, Jalosjos had not fully served his sentence, which was why he had to stay in prison.

And Dapat lost his job because he did not coordinate his release of Jalosjos with the DOJ, Apostol said.

This lack of coordination was the reason the DOJ and BuCor were now in "conflict" and "disagreement," he said, adding:

"The BuCor is saying they have their own rules, which were not approved by the DOJ."

Apostol said the DOJ was "just following the provisions of the Revised Penal Code" in rejecting the BuCor's release order on Jalosjos.

He acknowledged that the BuCor had the "right" to release prisoners. Nevertheless, it should coordinate with the DOJ, which has "administrative supervision" over it, he said.

Prisoner inventory

Calderon, the new BuCor director, said bureau officials were now preparing a list of prisoners aged 70 and above in order to facilitate their release.

"Our government has a policy of releasing elderly prisoners. Releasing them would help decongest our prisons as well," he said in a phone interview.

In October, Dapat said he had forwarded to the Bureau of Pardons and Parole the cases of 200 inmates eligible for release, as ordered by Malacañang.

Early this month, NBP chaplain Robert Olaguer broke the news that Jalosjos was set for release on Dec. 16, and Norberto Manero, convicted of killing an Italian priest, on Jan. 10.

Asked if Manero would be still freed in January, Calderon said: "I have not yet reviewed his papers. So we don't have a specific date. I have not yet received an order from the [DOJ] regarding that." With a report from Beverly T. Natividad

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THE DAILY GOSPEL



Friday, December 28, 2007
Holy Innocents, Martyrs

1 Jn 1:5-2:2
Matthew 2:13-18

1st Reading:
Gospel:

After the wise men had left, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you for Herod will soon be looking for the child in order to kill him."

Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and left that night for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. In this way, what the Lord had said through the prophet was fulfilled: I called my son out of Egypt.

When Herod found out that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was furious. He gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its neighborhood who were two years old or under. This was done in line with what he had learned from the wise men about the time when the star appeared.

In this way, what the prophet Jeremiah had said was fulfilled: A cry is heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation: Rachel weeps for her children. She refuses to be comforted, for they are no more.

Commentary

Our God is light, truth, freedom, and holiness. We are born in God, dwell in God and so must walk in the light and make sure that the truth dwells in us. We are not to deceive ourselves and become liars, saying that we do not sin and that there is no darkness in us. We are to keep ourselves from sin, from missing the mark of being the beloved children of God: for-giveness, love unto death, faithfulness in the face of violence and persecution, the protection of the least of our brothers and sisters, the refusal to harm others, love of enemies. We are to walk with Jesus, in the Spirit, in the presence of the Father.

Joseph together with the child and his mother flee from Herod's viciousness/murder and slaughter and they become refugees. When Herod realizes that the astrologers did not return, he takes out his rage on those who are in the vicinity of where the child might be. This is the destruction of the innocent—those who are associated with the Child of God, those who are threatened by life, the victims of injustice, violence, poverty, human misery, and the injustice of those in power. We must make sure that we never find ourselves among those who do the killing and the slaughtering, in anyone's name, let alone, lying and saying it is done in the name of the God of life.

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Benazir Bhutto dies

From page A1

Musharraf," referring to President Pervez Musharraf, Bhutto's main political opponent. A few began stoning cars outside.

US condemns killing

"We repeatedly informed the government to provide her proper security and appropriate equipment including jammers, but they paid no heed to our requests," Malik said.

US officials said they were looking into reports of Bhutto's death.

"Certainly, we condemn the attack on this rally. It demonstrates that there are still those in Pakistan who want to subvert reconciliation and efforts to advance democracy," said US deputy state department spokesperson Tom Casey.

Return from exile

The United States has for months been encouraging Musharraf to reach some kind of political accommodation with the opposition, particularly Bhutto, who was seen as having a wide base of support.

Bhutto served twice as Pakistan's prime minister between 1988 and 1996. She had returned to Pakistan from an eight-year exile on Oct. 18.

Her homecoming parade in Karachi was also targeted by a suicide attacker, who killed more than 140 people. On that occasion, Bhutto narrowly escaped injury.

Gunshots ring out

Party supporter Chaudry Mohammed Nazir said two gunshots rang out when Bhutto's vehicle pulled onto the main street and then there was a huge blast next to her car.

The clothing of some of the victims was shredded and people put party flags over their bodies. Police caps and shoes littered the asphalt.

It was Bhutto's first public meeting in Rawalpindi since she came back to the country.

In recent weeks, suicide bombers have repeatedly targeted security forces in

BSP warns ATM users

From page A1

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) in view of escalating complaints.

The following are "minimum" measures to ensure one's security in ATM and debit card transactions:

- Use ATMs that are familiar or that are in well-lit locations where one feels comfortable. If the machine is poorly lit or is in a hidden area, use another ATM.

- Have your card ready before approaching the ATM. Avoid having to go through a wallet or purse to find the card.

- Do not use ATMs that appear to have been tampered with or otherwise altered. Report such condition to the bank.

- Memorize your ATM personal identification number (PIN) and never disclose it to anyone. Do not keep those numbers or passwords in the wallet or purse. Never write them on the cards themselves. Avoid using easily available personal information like a birthday, nickname, mother's maiden name or consecutive numbers.

- Be mindful of "shoulder surfers" when using ATMs. Stand close to the ATM and shield the keypad with one hand when keying in the PIN and transaction amount.

- If the ATM is not working correctly, cancel the transaction and use a different ATM. If possible, report the problem to the bank.

- Carefully secure card and cash in the wallet, handbag or pocket before leaving the ATM.

- Do not leave the receipt behind. Compare ATM receipts to monthly statement. It is the best way to guard against fraud and it makes record-keeping easier.

- Do not let other people use your card. If your card is lost or stolen, report it immediately to the bank.

Comparative charges

To help the public make an informed judgment or enlightened decision regarding their choice of banks for their ATM transactions, the BSP also encouraged people to find out the comparative ATM charges of banks to cardholders of other banks.

A list of comparative ATM charges to cardholders of other banks is posted on the BSP website—<http://www.bsp.gov.ph/banking/servicefee.htm>. Banks charge cardholders of other banks between P5 and P12 per withdrawal. Some Megalink member-banks charge noncardholders P1 to P2 for a balance inquiry.

The banks with the lowest charges for cardholders of other banks are Centennial Bank, HSBC Savings Bank and Philippine Veterans Bank.

Depositors are likewise encouraged to report immediately to the bank concerned any erroneous entries in their deposit accounts for prompt correction and/or to report any delayed bank action to:

Financial Consumer Affairs Group, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, 10th Floor, Multistorey Building, Mabini, Manila. E-mail address: consumeraffairs@bsp.gov.ph telephone Nos.: Direct line (+632) 523-3631 and trunkline (+632) 524-7011 local 2584.

Rawalpindi, a city near the capital where Musharraf stays and the Pakistan Army has its headquarters.

After Bhutto's death, her supporters at the hospital began chanting "Dog, Musharraf, dog."

Police said the suicide bomber fired shots at Bhutto as she was leaving the rally venue in a park before blowing himself up.

"The man first fired at Bhutto's vehicle. She ducked and then he blew himself up," said police officer Mohammad Shahid.

People cried and hugged each other outside the hospital where she died. Residents of Karachi, Bhutto's hometown, said they heard gunshots after news of Bhutto's death spread, apparently from her enraged supporters.

A Reuters witness at the scene of the attack said he heard two shots moments before the blast. Another Reuters witness saw bodies and a mutilated human head strewn on a road outside the park where she held her rally. Reports from AP and Reuters



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First Regular Session

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RULES OF PROCEDURE GOVERNING INQUIRIES IN AID OF LEGISLATION

Section 1. Power to Conduct Inquiries. – Pursuant to *Section 21, Article VI* of the *Constitution*, the House of Representatives or any of its committees may conduct inquiries in aid of legislation in accordance with these rules.

The filing or pendency of a case before any court, tribunal or quasi-judicial or administrative body shall not stop or abate any inquiry conducted to carry out a legislative purpose.

Section 2. Modes of Initiation. – Inquiries may be initiated through the following modes:

- a. *motu proprio* action of a committee on any matter within its jurisdiction upon a majority vote of all its Members; or
- b. upon order of the House of Representatives through:
 - b1. the referral to the appropriate committee of a privilege speech containing or conveying a request or demand for the conduct of an inquiry, upon motion of the Majority Leader or his/her deputies; or
 - b2. the adoption of a resolution reported out by the Committee on Rules, after making a determination on the necessity and propriety of the conduct of an inquiry by a committee, directing a committee to conduct an inquiry: *Provided*, That all resolutions directing any committee to conduct an inquiry shall be referred to the Committee on Rules; or
 - b3. the referral of a petition filed or information given by any person not a Member of the House requesting such inquiry to the appropriate committee by the Committee on Rules after making a determination on the necessity and propriety of the conduct of an inquiry: *Provided*, That such petition or information is endorsed by the Speaker to the Committee on Rules and is given under oath, stating the facts upon which it is based, and accompanied by supporting documents.

Section 3. Changing the Committee(s) Authorized or Directed to Conduct an Inquiry. – The committee(s) authorized or directed to conduct an inquiry may be changed through:

- a. a motion of the Majority Leader approved in plenary: *Provided*, That in the case of resolutions on inquiries previously adopted, the motion shall amend said resolutions accordingly; and
- b. the timely filing of a motion for reconsideration of the adoption of a resolution directing a committee to conduct an inquiry.

Section 4. Conduct of Inquiry. – The committee(s) authorized and directed to conduct an inquiry may:

- a. upon a majority vote of all its Members, invite any other interested committee(s) or Members thereof to attend its hearings: *Provided*, That the committee(s) or Members thereof so invited shall not participate in the preparation and approval of the report on the investigation; and
- b. constitute sub-committees composed of at least one-fifth (1/5) of the total number of committee Members for the purpose of performing any and all acts which the committee as a whole is authorized to perform in the conduct of an inquiry except to punish for contempt.

The findings and recommendations of the sub-committees shall be submitted for approval and other appropriate action(s) thereon by the mother committee: *Provided*, That findings and recommendations including summary statements thereon or publications related thereto shall not be released by any Member of the sub-committee and the secretariat staff prior to the inclusion of the final committee report in the Calendar of Business as provided in *Section 17* hereof.

Section 5. Joint Inquiry or Investigation. – When a privilege speech, resolution, petition or information is referred to two or more committees, a joint inquiry by the said committees shall be conducted.

Section 6. Quorum - One-fifth (1/5) of all the Members of a committee or a majority of all the Members of a subcommittee shall constitute a quorum. For purposes of determining the existence of a quorum, the Speaker, the Deputy Speakers, the Majority Leader, the Deputy Majority Leaders, the Minority Leader and the Deputy Minority Leaders or the Members deputized by them shall be added to the total number of committee or sub-committee members, as the case may be, if they are present in a meeting. In cases of joint referrals, a quorum must be present in each of the committees concerned.

Section 7. Executive Sessions. - If the committee or sub-committee deems that the examination of a witness in a public hearing may endanger national security, it shall conduct the examination in an executive session, and shall make a determination of the necessity or propriety of conducting further examinations of such witness in a public hearing.

Attendance in executive sessions shall be limited to Members of the committee, the committee secretariat staff and such other persons whose presence are required or allowed by the Chairperson.

Testimony taken or evidence presented in an executive session, or any summary or excerpt thereof or documents related thereto, in whole or in part, shall not be made public, unless authorized by a majority vote of the Members present, there being a quorum.

Section 8. Attendance of Witnesses.- The committee shall have the power to issue *subpoena ad testificandum* and *subpoena duces tecum* to witnesses in any part of the country, signed by the Chairperson or acting Chairperson and the Speaker or acting Speaker. However, if the committee is unable to secure the signature of the Speaker or acting Speaker on a *subpoena ad testificandum* and/or *subpoena duces tecum*, it may request the Committee on Rules to act on the matter. Upon the recommendation of the Committee on Rules through a majority vote of all its Members after determining that the attendance of a witness is indispensable to the effective conduct of the inquiry, the Speaker shall issue a *subpoena ad testificandum* and/or a *subpoena duces tecum* to compel the attendance of a witness.

Within Metro Manila, *subpoena ad testificandum* and *subpoena duces tecum* shall be served by the Sergeant-at-Arms or his duly authorized deputies. Outside Metro Manila, service of these processes may be made by the appropriate police officer or authority of the town or city upon request of the Secretary General.

Subpoenas shall be served to witnesses at least three (3) days before a scheduled hearing in order to give them every opportunity to prepare for the hearing and to employ counsel, should they desire, and shall be accompanied by a notice stating that the witness may convey to the committee, by mail, telephone or any other electronic communication device, his/her desire to confer with the secretary of the committee prior to the date of the hearing.

Section 9. Rights and Duties of Witnesses. – The rights of witnesses including their right against self-incrimination shall be respected.

Witnesses who are not government officials summoned by the committee shall be entitled, upon their request and subject to the approval of the Speaker, to reasonable transportation expenses and such other amounts as may be deemed necessary for their stay in Metro Manila.

Witnesses shall testify under oath to be administered by the Chairperson or by any other person authorized by law.

A witness shall be limited to giving information relevant and germane to the subject matter under investigation. The committee shall rule upon the admissibility of any testimony or information presented by a witness. Privileged communications shall be respected.

Any witness desiring to deliver or present a prepared or written statement before the committee shall file a copy of such statement, under oath, with the secretary of the committee within forty-eight (48) hours before the hearing at which the statement is to be delivered or presented.

Such statements or portions thereof that are relevant and germane to the subject of the investigation may, at the conclusion of the testimony of the witness, and upon approval by a majority vote of the Members of the committee, a quorum being present, be inserted into the official transcript of the proceedings.

A witness shall be allowed to request for and be granted postponement of his/her appearance before the committee or sub-committee on grounds that render such witness physically unable to attend the inquiry or investigation: *Provided*, That the fact of physical inability to attend the inquiry or investigation is supported by appropriate medical or other certification as may be required by the committee or sub-committee, and: *Provided*

further, That no witness shall be granted more than two (2) postponements of appearance before the committee without justifiable cause.

Section 10. Rights and Duties of Persons Affected by a Hearing. – Where applicable, any person named in a public hearing or in the released record of testimonies given in executive sessions, who has not been previously so named shall, within a reasonable time thereafter, be notified of such fact by registered letter, return receipt requested, to his/her address last known to the committee. The notice shall include:

- a. a statement that the person has been so named;
- b. date and place of hearing where the person was named;
- c. name of the person who testified; and
- d. Information that a copy of the *Rules of Procedure Governing Inquiries in Aid of Legislation* is available for his/her perusal in the House.

Any person so notified who believes that his/her character or reputation was adversely affected may, within seven (7) days after receipt of said notice:

- a. communicate with the secretary of the committee; and/or
- b. request to appear in person before the committee in public session and give testimony, at his/her own expense.

Any person testifying under the foregoing provisions shall be accorded the same privileges as any other witness appearing before the committee, and may be questioned concerning any matter relevant and germane to the subject of the investigation.

Section 11. Contempt. - The committee may punish any person for contempt, by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the Members present, there being a quorum. The following shall be grounds for citing any person in contempt:

- a. refusal without legal excuse to obey summons;
- b. refusal to be sworn or placed under affirmation;
- c. refusal to answer any relevant inquiry;
- d. refusal to produce any books, papers, documents or records that are relevant to the inquiry and are in his/her possession;
- e. acting in a disrespectful manner towards any Member of the committee or any misbehavior in the presence of the committee; or
- f. undue interference in the conduct of proceedings during meetings.

Contempt of the committee shall be deemed contempt of the House. The person cited in this section may, upon order of the committee, be detained in such place as the Chairperson or acting Chairperson may designate.

Section 12. Penalty. – By a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the Members present, there being a quorum, those cited under *Section 11*, paragraphs (e) and (f) shall be detained for a period not exceeding ten (10) days in a place designated by the Chairperson or acting Chairperson under the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms.

Section 13. Appearance of Counsel. – The person at whose instance the inquiry was initiated may be represented by counsel.

A witness shall be informed by the committee or sub-committee that he/she may be represented by counsel. When informed by a witness of his/her desire to be represented by counsel or when such witness requests to be represented by counsel, the committee or sub-committee may provide a *counsel de officio* or allow him/her to be assisted by counsel of his/her own choice

The participation of counsel for the witness during the hearing and while the witness is testifying shall be limited to advising said witness of his/her legal rights.

Counsel for a witness shall conduct himself/herself in a professional manner and shall observe proper decorum. Otherwise, upon a majority vote of the Members present, there being a quorum, such counsel shall be subject to contempt or to such other disciplinary action that may include censure and removal from the room where the hearing is being conducted.

A counsel ordered removed from the room where the hearing is being conducted may, upon his/her request, be allowed to remain in the room as an observer. As such, he/she shall sit in the place reserved for the general public and shall have no participation in the proceedings.

In cases where a counsel for a witness is ordered removed from the room, the witness shall be given reasonable time as may be determined by the committee to secure the services of another counsel. Should the witness deliberately or capriciously fail or refuse to obtain the services of another counsel, a *counsel de officio* may be provided to the witness by the committee within a reasonable time. Thereafter, the hearing shall continue and the testimony of such witness shall be heard.

Section 14. Safekeeping and Release of Record of Testimonies of Witnesses. – The testimony of witnesses shall be recorded *verbatim*. Records of testimonies given in executive sessions shall be placed in the custody of the Secretary General who shall ensure their preservation and confidentiality.

A witness or his/her counsel, at the expense of the witness and upon written request duly approved by the committee Chairperson, may obtain transcripts of any public testimony of witnesses from the secretary of the committee.

No committee report, an excerpt or summary statement of the contents thereof, or any publication related thereto, shall be released by any Member of the committee and its secretariat staff prior to the inclusion of the report in the Calendar of Business.

Section 15. Termination of Inquiry. The committee shall terminate an inquiry, and submit a report thereon within sixty (60) calendar days from the date of commencement. The inquiry commences on the date of:

- a. referral of the privilege speech, petition or information to the pertinent committee; or
- b. adoption of resolution directing or authorizing the conduct of an inquiry.

Section 16. Report of Committee. - The report shall contain the findings of the committee on the subject matter of the inquiry, the grounds on which its findings are based and its recommendations, if any. The report shall be approved by a majority vote of the Members present, there being a quorum. Members who vote against the approval of the report and who do not sign the majority report may make concurring or dissenting opinions.

The report, together with any concurring and dissenting opinion, shall be filed with the Secretary General who shall include the same in the Order of Business within three (3) days from receipt thereof.

In case of joint inquiry, the committees concerned shall be jointly responsible for submitting the report to the House on the measure referred to them for consideration. The first committee mentioned in the joint referral shall be the lead committee and shall be principally responsible for preparing the report to the House: *Provided*, That the committees may decide to designate another committee among them to prepare the report.

Section 17. Plenary Action on the Report. – The report, upon inclusion in the Order of Business, shall be referred to the Committee on Rules for appropriate action. The Committee on Rules shall, thereafter, include the report in the Calendar of Business.

Upon inclusion of the report in the Calendar of Business, the Plenary may approve or adopt, disapprove or reject, in whole or in part, the report and its recommendation(s) or commit it to the archives.

Section 18. Internal Rules. – The committee tasked to conduct an inquiry may adopt internal rules of procedure: *Provided*, That these rules are consistent with the Rules of the House and to these rules.

Section 19. Rules of Procedure and Evidence. – The Rules of Court shall be suppletory to these rules.

Section 20. Effectivity. – These Rules shall take effect seven (7) days after publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Adopted,

JOSE DE VENECIA, JR.
Speaker

This Rules of Procedure Governing Inquiries in Aid of Legislation was adopted by the House of Representatives on November 20, 2007.

ROBERTO P. NAZARENO
Secretary-General

Atong Ang may yet get travel permit from court

By Jocelyn R. Uy

CHARLIE "ATONG" ANG MAY GET TO GIVE his daughter away in marriage in the United States after all.

Ang—on probation for two years after he was convicted of the lesser charge of corrupting a public official in the plunder case against deposed President Joseph Estrada—has gotten government lawyers to agree to let him fly to Las Vegas, Nevada, to attend his daughter Joaneivee's wedding on Jan. 19.

The Office of the Special Prosecutor said it would raise no objection and yesterday filed a manifestation with the Sandiganbayan, pointing out the trip was "a matter" between Ang and his probation officer.

"The probation officer has, in fact, expressed [her] conformity with the urgent motion for Ang's travel to the US," the special prosecutor said.

Probation officer Ceres Añonuevo, who has been supervising Ang the past seven months after he was convicted in May and who was present at the hearing, assured the court of Ang's "sincerity and candor."

Ang last week had asked the anti-graft court to let him leave for Las Vegas on Jan. 5. He intends to be away 25 days.

Ang was a gam-

bling crony of Estrada. Once, they were videotaped in a casino, a no-no for government officials since Estrada was Vice President at the time. Estrada himself was pardoned by President Macapagal-Arroyo in October after he was convicted of plunder.

But even if Ang were allowed to leave for Las Vegas by the court, he would still have to contend with the US government.

Yesterday, through his lawyer, Ruth Castelo, Ang informed the Sandiganbayan Special Division that he was awaiting word from the US Embassy in Manila on whether he—after his extradition from the United States last year—may renew his visa and reenter the country.

He also needs a new passport.

"While waiting for a reply from the US Embassy, Ang respectfully begs the court to allow him to apply for a passport con-

sidering it takes eight working days to process an electronic passport," Castelo said in her six-page manifestation.

To assure the court that he would return, Ang reiterated he was willing to post a P500,000 bond.

An unidentified friend has submitted to the court the title to a piece of property valued at P1.3 million to guarantee Ang would return, Castelo said.

Ang has twice been denied permission by the antigraft court to travel to Cambodia where a lottery firm was interested in hiring him as a consultant.

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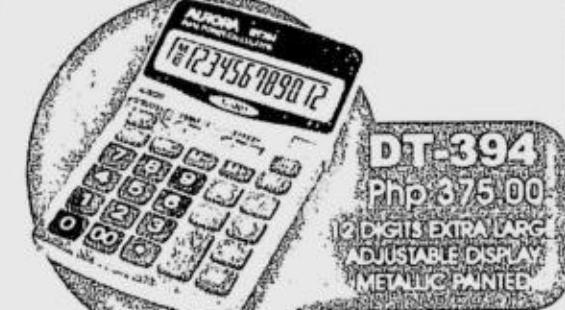
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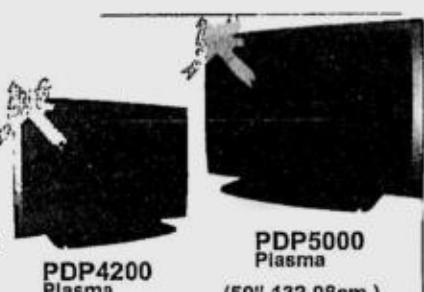
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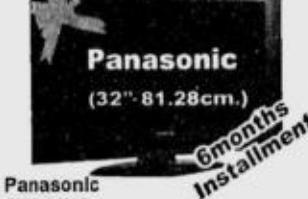


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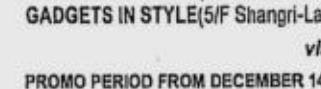
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Sumilao farmers hit San Miguel bid to discredit them

By Jerome Aning

FARMERS FROM SUMILAO, Bukidnon who marched to Manila to press their claim over a 144-ha land owned by San Miguel Foods Inc. yesterday deplored the food conglomerate's alleged attempts to discredit their bid to subject the property to agrarian reform.

In a statement from Sumilao, the 165 farmer-claimants said they were "roused to the heat of the controversy" following the full-page advertisements placed by SMFI in various newspapers.

The ads cited the benefits that the operations of SMFI would bring to the province of Bukidnon and its people while questioning the legal standing of the farmers over the disputed land in Barangay San Vicente, Sumilao.

Samuel Merida, president of farmers' Mapalad Multipurpose Cooperative said the ad only made it clear that SMFI "will spare no expense to boost its own claim and discredit the Sumilao farmers."

Their money, our rights

"This is a battle between their money and our rights as indigenous people and as farmer beneficiaries," he said.

The farmers embarked on a 1,700-km march to Manila in October to dramatize their plight. On Dec. 18, President Macapagal-Arroyo revoked the conversion order for the property, reclassifying the land to agricultural and thus placing it under the government's Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

In its ad, SMFI said that a number of the farmers were already agrarian reform beneficiaries and thus were no longer eligible to lay further claim to

the Sumilao property.

Arlene Bag-ao, a lawyer of the farmers, admitted that 68 of the 165 farmers have benefited from the adjacent 66-hectare Carlos estate.

"The fact remains that even those who have been beneficiaries of the Carlos estate only have a pittance—ranging from 0.4 to 0.9 hectares—from agrarian reform. The law defines a family size farm to be not more than 3 hectares."

The Sumilao farmers said they would push DAR to immediately issue a notice of coverage to begin the implementation of the President's order to place the property under CARP.

Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangadaman said his office would issue the notice of coverage 15 days after the President's issued the order. But he said the SMFI had the option to file a motion for reconsideration or bring the matter to the courts.

The property was formerly owned by Norberto Quisumbing who later sold it to SMFI in 2002.

With SMFI expected to contest the President's order, a militant group fishermen assailed Ms Arroyo for insulting the farmers by giving them false hopes and empty promises.

In a statement, Fernando Hicap, chair of the Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya), said that "in reality, Malacañang merely treated the Sumilao farmers to a merry go-round of waiting, waiting and waiting."

"What Mrs. Arroyo delivered during their meeting were empty promises, false hopes and class betrayal," he added. With Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

May 277 OPM na,

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Honoring Adrian Cristobal

SEN. MAR ROXAS HAS filed a resolution for the Senate to honor the late Adrian E. Cristobal Sr. for his contributions to Philippine journalism and literary arts spanning five decades.

In Senate Resolution 261, Roxas said Cristobal "deserves to be honored and fondly remembered for his dedication and excellence in journalism and writing and public service as former labor secretary and chair of the Social Security System."

Roxas said that despite failing to get a college diploma, Cristobal was able to excel in his fields of choice and garnered respect as one of the country's foremost intellectuals.

Cristobal started his journalism career as a writer-re-

porter of the Manila Times in the 1950s and he went on to become an editorial writer, publisher and columnist for various publications, including the Philippine Daily Inquirer where he used to write the widely-read column.

'Breakfast table'

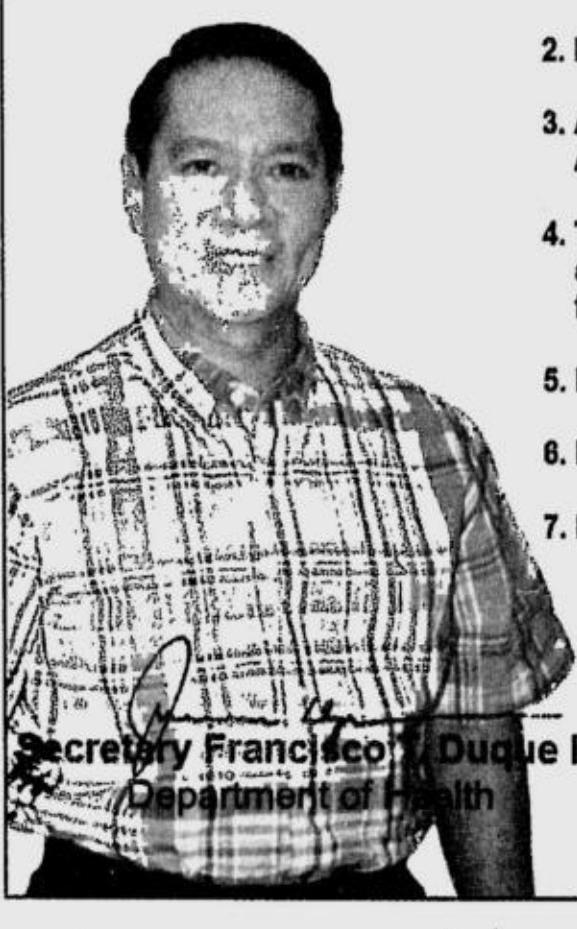
Cristobal also made a name in the literary arts having written several short stories ("I, Suliman") and 5 books ("The Tragedy of the Revolution" a historical essay on the betrayal and execution of Andres Bonifacio) and being the co-founder of the UP Institute of Creative Writing. Cristobal also authored the economic blueprint of President Carlos Garcia's Filipino First economic policy.

HEALTH ADVISORY FOR THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

Here are some health tips for the Christmas Season:

1. Be kind to your heart. Prepare a well-balanced Noche Buena and Media Noche meals. Make sure that vegetables and fruits are on the table together with your traditional ham and queso de bola. Avoid fatty and salty foods. Avoid too much drinking and don't smoke.
2. Plan Christmas activities for yourself and your family to prevent tension and stress.
3. Avoid crowded areas because organisms that cause diseases multiply and spread easily. Airy and well-ventilated areas are essential to healthy living.
4. Take care of yourself and your family against sudden changes in temperature. Children and adults may become susceptible to cough colds and fever. If your cough, colds and fever is more than five days, consult your nearest health facility.
5. Drink plenty of liquids. Drink plenty of water and fruit juices to facilitate excretion.
6. Have enough sleep. Give yourself enough sleep so that the mind and body can rest.
7. Buy safe toys with no pointed or sharp edges nor too small toys that can cause choking.

**Do not use fireworks and firecrackers during the Holidays.
Make some noise by using the "torotot", pots, pans and other noise-making gadgets.**



Secretary Francisco Duque III
Department of Health



DOH it na!



Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo
President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo

The image shows a large, weathered wooden sign with the words "YEAR END" at the top and "SALE" in a larger, stylized font below. The background is covered with a dense grid of text representing different retail categories. The categories are repeated in a grid pattern across the entire background, including "apparel", "bags & luggage", "shoes", "baby essentials", "home furnishings", "fashion accessories", and "toys and games". The text is in a small, sans-serif font and is partially obscured by the main sign.

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OPINION

Text us your feedback: Inquirer opn name/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

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Not innocent

HOW NICE OF THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION to raise a ruckus over the escape, or was it the release, of convicted child rapist Romeo Jalosjos. What is that expression again? They are closing the barn door after the horse has already bolted. Indeed, in the case of Jalosjos, they are firing the ranch hands too—after having unshackled the horse in the first place.

EDITORIAL The other day, President Macapagal-Arroyo fired Ricardo Dapat as director of the Bureau of Corrections, or so Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said. (Dapat reports to Gonzalez, so it was actually the justice secretary's responsibility to relieve him; the order from the President, as revealed by Gonzalez, is a transparent attempt to communicate her continuing alleged displeasure with the latest twists and turns in the Jalosjos case.)

Dapat has denied any wrongdoing, but his denial has only succeeded in tightening the noose around his neck. He said Jalosjos, who flew to Dapitan, Zamboanga del Norte, on Dec. 22, was not released but had escaped. "I did everything, but he escaped," he said in Filipino. "I am not to blame here [Wala akong kasalanan diyan]."

We beg to disagree. A prisoner's escape is an even worse act of negligence that Dapat has to answer for. But that is merely our view, based on considerations of impartial justice. Dapat's emphatic protestations that he did not release Jalosjos—the discharge order the ex-congressman has been waving about is "not valid," he said—suggest that he is more worried about Gonzalez's idea of partial justice. Partial to whom? Why, the President, of course.

Gonzalez's announcement the other day continued the series of statements he has made distancing Ms Arroyo from the Jalosjos fiasco and protecting her from the PR fallout. "Upon the instruction of the President, I have installed [retired] General [Oscar] Calderon as the acting director of the [Bureau of Corrections] vice General Dapat," Gonzalez said. He added: "I think these developments speak for themselves—the fact [for example] that General Calderon has made his appearance on the request of the President."

(That he has to strain and point out that the developments speak for themselves suggests that the decisions are in fact ambiguous, and need a little interpretative push.)

To Dapat's pained rationalizations and Gonzalez's elaborate explanations, add the outrageous manifestations of the convict's own counsel. "We will argue about reasons, but we don't question the word 'conviction' [except when he is called] a 'convicted child rapist,'" said lawyer Alfredo Jimenez. "We are urging the media to use 'convicted minor rapist,'" he added.

How nice. That makes Jalosjos sound like a petty criminal, instead of the child rapist that he is. Jimenez objects to the use of the word "child," because it has an "open meaning" and may refer to "kids, maybe toddlers, [up] to 12 years old." Well, in that case, we will continue to call Jalosjos a convicted child rapist then, because the victim he was convicted of statutory rape for was only 11 years old at the time. The last time we looked, 11 was less than 12.

(Today being Holy Innocents Day, perhaps we can also be forgiven for asking: When Herod ordered the death of all first-borns, did his lawyers quibble whether the victims should be called minors or children too?)

As anyone can see, a ranch can get pretty busy, especially when the ranchers decide to close the barn door as loudly as possible. There is certainly much to be angry about. It hardly seems credible that, in the handling of the politically powerful Jalosjos, lower-echelon officials like Dapat would act without orders from above. In all likelihood, the mess we see today is the direct result of either (a) top officials furiously back-tracking from an earlier order to accommodate Jalosjos or (b) lower officials over-zealously anticipating just such an order.

The truth is, the President wouldn't have the Jalosjos problem on her hands today if she had not decided, for reasons of her own, to commute the convicted child rapist's two life sentences to a mere 16 years last April. That decision took the shackles off the horse—and threw the barn door wide open.



Send Jalosjos back to Muntinlupa

As I See It



Neal H. Cruz

WHAT DID I TELL YOU? CONFINING CHILD rapist and prison escapee Romeo Jalosjos in the San Ramon Penal Colony in his home province of Zamboanga del Norte is like throwing the turtle into the river. That's what he wants. And as predicted, it is like a fiesta in the penal colony as supporters flock to it to see if their idol was changed by his stay in Munti. (He has; he has become fatter.)

Prison officials are not limiting the visitors, despite the risk. Jalosjos can hold a political rally there and they wouldn't put up a finger in protest. The news is that Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez has dismissed Bureau of Corrections Director Ricardo Dapat. *Dapat lang*. Maybe he should do the same to San Ramon officials. The way our prison officials are coddling Jalosjos is putting to ridicule our prisons and our justice system. And maybe encouraging other criminals to rape children and escape from prison.

In fact, Malacañang and the Department of Justice may be on it. President Macapagal-Arroyo's order that Jalosjos should not be released until he turns 70, Gonzalez's order not to release him, and Jalosjos' confinement in Zamboanga instead of Munti may all be a *moro-moro*—all part of a plan to deceive the public.

When the people became angry at the announcement that the convicted rapist sentenced to two life terms would be prematurely released before Christmas, Malacañang had to backtrack. The President must not be perceived as a coddler of child rapists, especially because she is a woman. Releasing the visiting GI who raped a Filipina to the American Embassy was bad enough. Pardon for Jalosjos makes it worse.

But maybe GMA has already given her word to Jalosjos that he would be a free man by Christmas. Maybe GMA cannot afford to displease him. He may start singing about what happened in his province during the 2004 elections.

So a script has to be written for a win-win solution. GMA must not be seen as soft on criminals with two life sentences. So Jalosjos should not be able to waltz out of prison just

like that. That will please the public. But to please Jalosjos and his supporters (remember, politics is addition), the prisoner must be able to fulfill his boast to his supporters that he would be with them before yearend.

But how can he go home to Zamboanga if he is still a prisoner in Munti? So, he was allowed to dance out of Munti without the guards stopping him, and he was taken by his bodyguards to the domestic airport where a private plane flew him to Zamboanga. The anger of Malacañang and Gonzalez may all have been just for show. Even the dismissal of Dapat may be part of that show ("Pasensya ka na muna, pare"). And so perhaps was Jalosjos' rearrest by the police.

The smoking gun is that instead of being taken back to Munti and placed in the *bartolina* like all other escaped prisoners, Gonzalez and Malacañang allowed him to be taken to the San Ramon Penal Colony where he would be near his family and friends. In fact, Jalosjos may be allowed to leave it during the day and come back at night, and perhaps not even. All these could be part of the plan.

But people cannot be fooled all the time. The arrangement is highly unusual. First of all, penal colonies are for prisoners on good behavior. Escaping from prison (which is what Jalosjos did, whatever his lawyers say to justify it) is not "good behavior" anyway you look at it. It is very bad behavior, and other prisoners who did that, when recaptured, were immediately placed in isolation in the prison they escaped from, with all their privileges withdrawn, and another six years of imprisonment

added to the original sentence. So why is this escaped rapist being treated by the justice department like he has a halo over his head? Very unusual, *di ba?*

In the second place, Jalosjos has shown that he is a flight risk. Penal colonies are only for those who are not flight risks, as they are like prisons without bars. So why is Jalosjos allowed to hold his own fiesta in San Ramon?

The only way the people can be convinced that GMA and Gonzalez are not part of the conspiracy is for them to order that Jalosjos be taken back to Munti immediately, placed in isolation. In addition, they should withdraw all his privileges and charge him with trying to escape so that another sentence will be added to his two life terms. GMA should also withdraw the executive clemency she gave Jalosjos because he has shown very clearly that he does not deserve it. He has shown no remorse, he has not reformed, and is still as arrogant as ever. He is still a menace to society, especially to children.

The other *moro-moro* that goes on at this time of the year is the one performed by the police. That is the farce of putting masking tape on the barrels of the service firearms of policemen, all in the full glare of television and still cameras. That is to prevent *kuno*, the cops from firing their guns during the New Year's Eve merrymaking. Many innocent people have been killed by stray bullets from guns shot into the air on New Year's Eve. As if the tapes will prevent that.

What's to stop cops from firing their guns nevertheless and then putting new tapes on the barrels of their guns? What about the gun-crazy civilians who fire their guns to show off to their neighbors? One way to stop them is for law-abiding citizens, neighbors or not, to report these trigger-happy crazies, cops or not, and for the police to charge them with illegal discharge of firearms, and for the courts to send them to jail, not just order them to pay fines.

When malls replace public parks

PASSION FOR REASON

Raul C. Pangalangan



SHOPPING MALLS ARE THE NEW PUBLIC parks. We have kept the old "parks" from the past, like the Luneta, the Manila Bay promenade and the breakwater. Intramuros and Fort Santiago are in eternal re-gentrification, half-way between their glory years during Spanish rule and their nadir during the post-Liberation era when they became a slum colony. Quezon Memorial Circle continues to attract families, but a good part of it has been cemented (or asphalted) over. We have reinvigorated existing facilities, like the La Mesa Dam ecological park, with a lot of help from the NGOs. And we have also shut down existing ones, like the Arroceros garden along the Pasig River. Finally, we have created new ones; Marikina City has cleared the banks of the Marikina River and created idyllic bike lanes that converge into public plazas.

There are good signs that we have begun to reverse the Southeast Asian trend toward the super-mall as the epitome of the public space. Once, during an international conference in Manila, the Filipino hosts brought the foreign guests to an art exhibit at SM Megamall, and until today, many years later, wherever I meet these delegates, they still recall "that trip" to a shopping mall to look at paintings.

I have tried hard to explain that it's the Pinoy equivalent of visiting a museum or a public park. It's just that we locate them in malls because these are the only air-conditioned places that are publicly accessible. Look at the other hot and humid cities in Asia, like Kuala Lumpur, Singapore and Bangkok. When you live along the earth's equator, the goal of your entire existence is to avoid the sun and seek out air-conditioning. Still there are lessons to be learned.

One, why is it that local governments are wary of creating public parks? Because very soon they might get run over by informal settlers ("squatters" to most of you). Every unguarded urban space stands the risk of being transformed into an urban slum, and given our laws against forced evictions, the game is to ensure that the settlers are detected immedi-

ately and never get to settle in. Moreover, there is the cost of maintenance and the risk that the maintenance crew themselves will settle in.

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Converting



'Uncouth, thick-faced' teachers

THE LETTERS TITLED "TEACHING SIDELINE" (INQUIRER, 11/29/07) and "Teachers cheat by not teaching" (INQUIRER, 12/17/07) prompted me to write this letter.

Some experiences in the past several years have confirmed my suspicion that many Filipinos no longer have a high regard for the teaching profession.

A few years ago, I was introduced at a wedding to a relatively young Quezon City councilor who went to the same private school I attended from elementary to high school. From across the table, "Mr. Konsehal" asked me what my course was. When I told him I was taking secondary education, major in English at the University of Santo Tomas, he looked at me contemptibly, saying: "What? You wanna be a teacher?"

His apparently rhetorical question silenced everyone (including his own entourage) at our table. Needless to say, I was taken aback by his failure to hide his condescending attitude. (After all, diplomatic skills are expected of politicos like him.)

I was left deeply wondering why he reacted that way. Perhaps he thought I was a masochist for wanting to teach, considering that most teachers get an awfully "pathetic" salary. Or perhaps, during his student days, he was victimized or disillusioned by his own teachers' improprieties.

How, indeed, can we teachers be seen as role models if we sell to our students "Chocnut" and "Boom-Boom lollipops" inside the classroom? How can we gain their respect if we dump money into their hands and order them to go to the canteen pronto to buy us one cup of rice at lunch time?

Do we not realize that we come off uncouth and thick-faced if we constantly "joke" to students about giving a "pakin" during their birthdays, Christmastime, graduation season, or when their OFW parents arrive from abroad? How shameless can we get to send a student on an errand to a government office to carry out a personal obligation just because our schedule prevents us from doing it ourselves?

Meanwhile, letter writers have

worried me no end with their various accounts of the unethical, unprofessional and exploitative practices of their own teachers. These "horror" stories further cheapen the image of my profession.

Certain observations made me realize that this problem boils down mostly to the teacher's upbringing, which makes it even harder to solve, for the teacher is blind to his or her own malpractices. But something must be done. All I can hope for is that the Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education will address this problem. Likewise, school administrators should monitor very closely their teachers' behavior, making sure they do not abuse the considerable power they have over students. Parents as well should not be afraid to speak up against abusive teachers.

To my fellow teachers, we may unfortunately be underpaid, but that does not justify unprofessional conduct. Let's have some self-respect.

—CLAUDE LUCAS C.
DESABILADERAS,
claudelucas2003@yahoo.com

quest for pension recomputation in August this year. On Aug. 16, 2007, SSS Lipa sent an endorsement letter to SSS San Pablo branch (our South Luzon cluster's main office in Laguna). SSS San Pablo received the endorsement letter on that same day.

Edna Tanguin, head of the SSS branch in San Pablo, has requested for a manual verification of Ribano's records. The process en-

tails checking every entry of a member's records by hand. It was finished on Nov. 26, and results show a need for an adjustment.

SSS San Pablo is now communicating with Ribano to tell him about the results.

—JOEL P. PALACIOS,
assistant vice president,
Media Affairs Department,
Social Security System, QC

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assistant vice president,
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Social Security System, QC

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5th in year 2007, 54th in 7 years

FERNANDO "BATMAN" LINTUAN, the first president of the Davao Sportswriters Association and broadcaster of dxGO Aksyon Radyo, was gunned down at close range.

His death brought to five the number of journalists killed in 2007 and to 54 the number of journalists killed under the Arroyo administration.

Reports from the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines Davao Chapter stated that a gunman riding on a motorcycle shot Lintuan while on board a car that was about to leave the station. Lintuan was hit in the head.

Two other broadcasters, Louie Ceniza and Edgar Banzon were with him in the car.

Lintuan is the fifth Davao journalist to be killed since 1986. Broadcaster Jun Porras Palao was killed Sept. 6, 2003, while Narciso Balani, Rogie Zagado and Leo Palo were killed on Aug. 27, 1987—all of them were with dxRA Aksyon Radyo. Davao photojournalist Gene Boyd Lumawag, on the other hand, was in assignment in Jolo, Sulu when he was shot on Nov. 12, 2004.

The other journalists killed this year were Hernani Pastolero (Sultan Kudarat), Carmelito Palacios (Nueva Ecija), Dodie Nuñez (Cavite) and Vicente Sumalpong (Tawi-Tawi).

Lintuan left behind four children.

—ROWENA PARAAN,
executive coordinator,
Media Safety Office,
IFJ-National Union of
Journalists of the Philippines
105-A Scout Castor St., QC

Bush's duplicity exposed by NIE

THE RECENT REVELATION OF the declassified National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) which confirmed that Iranian nuclear weapons development had been halted as early as 2003 has dashed the warmongering rhetoric of US President George Bush. And it should teach Washington that the world will never be safe as long as the hawks continue to hold sway at the White House.

For one, it proved Bush's critics right and further diminished the worth of US policy in inveigling the entire world to join a campaign of hate and aggression against Iran.

Second, it made Bush look silly and the caboodle of US officials boasting his tirades as nothing but nattering nabobs of nuclear blackness.

Third, it shattered the myth that Washington bases its policies and demeanor on good old intelligence and it exposed Bush and company's incredible vice of creating a reality of their own, a solipsis-

ism that is dangerous to world peace and the lives of Iranians, Americans and all peoples on earth.

We are outraged by the insistence of US officials that their May 2005 assessment that Iran was on the verge of creating a nuclear weapon was correct in all essentials, even in the face of incontrovertible evidence that Bush and company had lied.

This is akin to Bush's insistence that the executed Saddam Hussein was guilty of harboring Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida when facts showed that Hussein hated Bin Laden and fundamentalism so much that he would have hunted fundamentalists down the way honey badgers hunt cobras.

Alas, the world will never be at peace if Washington will continue to insist in its version of reality and wrong policies, in utter disregard of its own intelligence.

—DR. ERICK SAN JUAN,
S-208, Manila Bank Bldg.,
6772 Ayala Ave., Makati City

Incredible praise from king of Spain

WE COULDN'T BELIEVE THE ACOLADE and praise heaped by King Carlos I of Spain on Ms Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo for her adherence to democracy and outstanding human rights record." We wonder where His Majesty has been all this time. Was he properly briefed before heaping those unbelievable praise on Ms Arroyo?

What is outstanding in this administration? A human rights record that is worse than that of Marcos' martial law?

More than 800 cases of extrajudicial killings have claimed the lives of political activists and journalists. There are hundreds of forced disappearances. And we have seen the violent suppression of the people's basic right to

peaceably assemble and of the freedom of the press, and the continuing disregard of democratic processes in a clear attempt to hide the truth in controversies hounding the Arroyo administration. Did His Majesty praise Ms Arroyo for all these?

Maypagasa strongly urges the Spanish government and other European Union states to put pressure on this immoral government to stop it from committing more of these illegal acts. The European Union must not close its eyes and condone the anti-democratic actions being perpetrated by the Arroyo administration against the Filipino people.

—ROEL GARCIA,
spokesperson, Maypagasa,
maypagasaphil@yahoo

Can't be any better without English

THIS IS A REACTION TO THE letter "Better without English?" (INQUIRER, 12/15/07)

If deteriorating English persists, we just have to root out the decay until English becomes an efficient tool for learning. School administrators, teachers and learners themselves, share in the task of upgrading English for knowledge acquisition. Sound proposals to bring about quality English must be within the grasp of people entrusted with quality English. In addition, a constant back-up and catch-on mechanism at the administrative and instructional levels must grapple with the normal curve phenomenon of about 50 percent in a typical English classroom performing below average.

Why shove off English which occupies a notch above other Asian neighbors in literature, journals, periodicals, newspapers, textbooks, library holdings, radio broadcasts and stage presentations among others? We study English not necessarily to communicate with Filipinos since a native tongue inheres for social interaction, with a national language to boot.

Neither do we learn to speak English to communicate with foreigners in our country, nor to prepare for jobs abroad, nor to bone up for call centers. Short- and long-term goals in learning English focus on its immediate use in school and self-study to reinforce knowledge that marks an educated person. Disconnected from the issues on governance and social deviations, teaching-English protagonists have gone a long way with English despite its lack of fine-tuning.

Let's move onward with English. Only the faint-of-heart retreat and surrender to the rub on Philippine English.

—ALICE S. GO,
Baybay, Leyte 6521

More than enough reason to resign

AGAIN ANOTHER INTERNATIONAL forum, Transparency International, listed the Philippines in the top 10 of world corruption.

This finding is not an eye-opener but a call for Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez and Chair Guillermo Carague of the Commission on Audit to resign for failing to stop the increasing menace of corruption in Philippine society.

As for Dr. Constancia de Guzman, chair of the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC), she may be accorded the benefit of understanding; her decisions, even though meritorious, are being reversed by the Office of the President, specifically by Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

—LIGORIO G.M. NAVAL,
114-B Alima,
Bacoor, Cavite

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Ping seeks probe of Asean meet deals

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. in Manila
and Jolene R. Bulambot, Inquirer Visayas

SEN. PANFILO "PING" LACSON WILL FILE TODAY a Senate resolution seeking an immediate investigation of the P3.5 billion in government money "squandered" for the overpriced construction of the Cebu International Convention Center (CICC) which was rushed for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) summit last January.

"This is part of my promise during my campaign in Cebu not to let this glaring robbery of the nation's money just pass," said Lac-

son in a text message to reporters.

Lacson said the CICC alone was overpriced by at least P50 million not to mention the P500 million spent for decorative lampposts and P83 million for closed circuit television cameras (CCTV) that did not work.

Lacson was reacting to a call by Cebu businessman Crisologo Saavedra who sought the senator's help to look into the anomalous transactions that he claimed were facilitated through negotiated contracts

and selective bidding conducted by Cebu officials led by Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia.

In Cebu City, a regional trial court judge yesterday ordered the arrest of a Cebuano broadcaster and columnist accused of libel for allegedly maligning in his column the reputation of Governor Garcia.

Judge Geraldine Econd, presiding judge of RTC Branch 9 issued on Thursday an arrest warrant against Leo Lastimosa, columnist of local daily The Freeman and sta-

tion manager of dyAB of ABS-CBN.

The judge ordered the chief of the warrant and subpoena section of the Cebu City police to arrest Lastimosa and to submit a report in 10 days. A bail of P10,000 was set in the information.

The information of libel against Lastimosa said that the statements in his column induced readers to think that Garcia, in hosting the 12th Asean summit, was directly responsible for the monumental expenses incurred by the government, including the

construction of the CICC.

Garcia also accused Lastimosa of maligning her reputation in his column.

She claimed that Lastimosa's column dated April 14, 2007 was malicious and false, exposing her to public hatred and contempt.

Econg told the INQUIRER that she found probable cause for the charges against Lastimosa, prompting her to issue a warrant of arrest despite the petition for review filed by Lastimosa before the Department of Justice.

Slain UN worker remembered for selflessness

MOGPOG, MARINDUQUE—AMID THE drizzle, the family and friends of Gene Luna, the United Nations World Food Program (UN-WFP) Filipina finance officer killed in a bombing in Algeria last Dec. 11, bid their final farewell to her past noon Wednesday at the Mogpog Municipal Cemetery.

Alghassim Wurie, deputy country director of the UN-WFP Philippines, said Luna is best remembered for her friendliness, love, concern and selflessness.

"She is a true colleague, a sister to everybody who gives her best in everything she does. Because of this, she is mourned by the whole WFP worldwide," said Wurie.

He said Luna could have survived the bomb blast had she thought of her safety first.

Instead of saving herself after the first blast, Luna checked to see if her colleagues were safe.

Unfortunately, another bomb went off and a portion of the building where they were working collapsed and pinned Luna and some of her coworkers to death.

Wurie also recalled that in the UN and the humanitarian workers' circle, Luna was best remembered for her courage and alertness.

Dr. Homer Montejo, dean of the graduate school of the Marinduque State College and a childhood friend of Luna, said Luna sacrificed her life to serve others. *Gerald Gene R. Querubin, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

NEWSBRIEFS

Korean couple slain

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—A Korean couple and two men were murdered in separate incidents in Porac, Pampanga, on Wednesday and on Christmas Day, police said. Security guard Danilo Macalimpas reported finding the bodies of Oh Young-kwan, 38, and his wife, Lee Hyen-koung, near their house in Go Hwang Village in Barangay Manibaug Paralaya at past 7 a.m. Dec. 26.

Police said Oh had bullet wounds on his left cheek while Lee was shot in the head. Pampanga police chief Senior Supt. Keith Singian had ordered a search for the couple's driver that the neighbors said had not reported for work in the last four days.

Also in Porac, Marino Arceo, 41, and his helper, Renato Guiao, 25, were shot dead inside the New Trends Barber Shop in Barangay Sangatba on Tuesday. Police found five spent shells from a .45 cal. gun and an M-16 rifle in the barbershop owned by Arceo.

Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon

Dengue up in E. Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—Eastern Visayas registered an increase in dengue fever cases in 2007, the Department of Health regional office disclosed.

The data of the DOH regional epidemiology and surveillance unit (Resu) showed that the region had 1,162 dengue cases with eight deaths from the mosquito-borne disease in 2007. This figure was much higher than the 355 dengue cases and one death reported in 2006.

Regional health office records showed that Leyte registered in 2007 the highest number of dengue fever cases at 647, which was more than double the province's 239 cases recorded last year.

Biliran had the lowest at 22 cases but had only six cases in 2006.

Joey A. Gabieta, Inquirer Visayas

Cop execs face probe

DUMAGUETE CITY—Some members of the Philippine National Police and police station chiefs in Negros Oriental face investigation for their possible involvement as participants or protectors of illegal gambling.

PNP provincial director Senior Supt. Melvin Ramon Buenafe said they have seen "some indicators from evidence recovered during some raids" that a number of officers and policemen could be involved in illegal gambling operation that rides on the Swertres Lotto.

Swertres Lotto is a government-sponsored numbers game drawn every night, in which the winning combination is based on three numbers from zero to nine.

Romy Amarado, Inquirer Visayas

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Per DTI-NCR Permit no. 4879 Series of 2007

Salug folk finally able to say hello to Graham Bell

From page A1

June, when her science teacher took the class on a field trip to Dipolog City. She says she was thrilled when she heard a voice on the other end of the line.

Dipolog, only 100 km away, is light years ahead of Salug when it comes to communications.

Fax messages

That's where Mayor Jesus Lim of Salug used to get his facsimile message of greetings from Malacañang up until a year ago.

This year, some bright boys in the municipality decided it was time to activate the dead TSB lines, says Fortunata Postigo, equipment operator of the Department of Transportation and Communications assigned in Salug.

Workers cleaned up TSB equipment covered with moss, dust and rust and got replacements for parts that had been vandalized.

Experts from the DOTC in its Western Mindanao branch upgraded the system and came up with a proposal to offer the TSB to household subscribers.

Before approving the proposal, DOTC regional director Mito-on Ibra consulted local and town officials and officially launched a

fixed line utilizing a wireless terminal system for household subscribers for an initial fee of P1,900 for local calls and an additional P3,000 National Direct Dialing or NDD.

Few takers

However, only local government officials, businessmen and well-to-do families can afford the rates, Postigo says, defeating the purpose of the TSB, envisioned as a facility for the rural poor. Few can afford the monthly fee of P250.

The wireless terminal and repeaters also could only serve 40 subscribers within reach of the communications tower in Barangay Poblacion.

Lim is satisfied despite the limitations. "At least we no longer have to subscribe to telegram or send people to pick faxed messages from Dipolog town," he says.

Postigo said all the facilities of TSB had already been put to good use by recycling towers, terminals and other cables.

Outdated system

The TSB system is outdated. It can only be used using coins or phone cards. "You cannot receive calls, just outgoing calls," says Postigo.

When the system was officially turned over

to the village officials in 2000, barangay officials refused to own up the responsibility even though they were promised a set of phone and revenue for the community, Postigo says.

Postigo says the TSB system and its units ended up as "a child's toy."

In Dumanag, Mayor Edgardo Jamero questions the installation of orange-colored TSB booths, which he calls "orange elephants."

Phones never rang

Jamero says the national government had embarked on a multimillion-dollar telecommunication project way back in 1999 up to 2004 "with minimal impact to the local communities and not one hundred percent operational."

The Commission on Information and Communication Technology claims to have installed a total of 8,810 units of telephone lines in the provinces of Quezon, Negros Oriental, Lanao del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte, Nueva Vizcaya and Misamis Occidental from 1998 to 2002.

In its website, the CICT claimed that "all the systems are now operational in provincial levels."

Not in Salug. The TSB phones never rang, until stopgap measures were initiated by desperate villagers.



NAIRUDDIN
Maalon, 6, tells the INQUIRER that his father had told him the phones in their village were installed on the day he was born.
JULIE S. ALIPALA/INQUIRER MINDANAO

Phone equipment worth \$200M rusting . . .

From page A1

subject to legislative scrutiny, although Congress has the power of the purse.

Foreign loan amortization is automatically included in the annual national budget, without debate, so that foreign-funded projects are presented pretty much as a fait accompli. The practice has resulted in all sorts of abuses.

The TSB project was conceived under a 1989 law and implemented by a succession of administrations from Corazon Aquino, through Fidel Ramos, Joseph Estrada and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

The plan, to be carried out in four phases at a time when cellular phones were coming into vogue during the dotcom revolution, was to hook up 20,000 barangays with the rest of the country using land lines and telephone booths, says former Sen. Serge Osmeña.

The expense for the facility in each barangay was P5 million for a whopping overall cost of P100 billion, says Osmeña.

The project was never fully implemented and was shelved following the dissolution in 2000 of the Municipal Telephone Project Office (MTPO), the agency tasked to implement it.

Even in areas where lines have been laid down and telephones installed, there is no dial tone.

At the time the project was abandoned, an estimated P53 billion (\$1.1 billion) had gone down the drain.

"It is 100 percent wasted," says Osmeña. And because the government is still paying for unused equipment, he says, "that's an even worse form of corruption ... it's a continuing scam."

Osmeña had opposed the project, albeit unsuccessfully, during annual budget hearings and the investigation conducted by the Senate blue ribbon committee in 2000.

He also fought but failed to stop the continuing practice of allocating automatically in the annual national budget the amortization of foreign loans contracted by the government without congressional consent.

Transportation and Communications Assistant Secretary Lorenzo Formoso III, explaining why the TSB project failed, says that it never got the required budgetary support from Congress for maintenance and upgrading of equipment in recent years and had to be mothballed.

"It was also overtaken by the rapid changes in information technology," says Formoso. He says by the time the project was up and running, equipment had become obsolete. "People were already using cell phones."

The TSB project went off the radar screen, until the \$329-million National Broadband Network (NBN) controversy broke out this year with allegations of overpricing and bribery.

Ms Arroyo later scrapped the contract with China's ZTE Corp. to be financed out a concessional loan for 20 years with a 3-percent interest and a five-year grace period.

It was the first time that a Chinese concessional loan had been scrapped anywhere in the world, say sources in Beijing's embassy in Manila. They deny reports that the loan was tied and that ZTE was imposed on Manila.

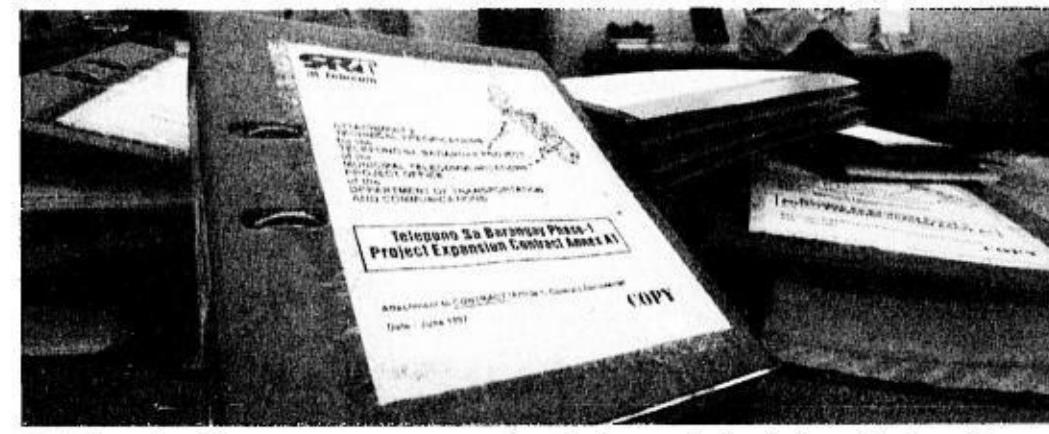
"The Philippine government has full control of the project," says one source.

Still, the DOTC says it is pursuing the project, perhaps using another financing mode, to wire the nation's bureaucracy digitally and flesh out the administration's vision of a "cyber-corridor" that will transform the nation into an information technology powerhouse in the region.

Dismal tract record

In the midst of the NBN scandal, the INQUIRER received an "aide memoire" outlining examples of the government's dismal track record in its telecommunications ventures, including the TSB fiasco.

"Publicly owned backbones/networks are not within the core competence of the government," says the document.



THESE stacks of documents were presented to the Senate during the investigation of the controversial Telepono sa Barangay project in 2000.

It says the DOTC has not demonstrated its ability to operate, maintain, repair and provide continuing funding for telecommunications projects.

The first satellite-based broadband network was installed at the Office of the Press Secretary. The heat-sensitive equipment required air-conditioned rooms 24 hours/day, which the government was not able to provide. It is barely used and expensive to maintain. No funds have been allotted for its repair and maintenance," the paper says.

The (TSB) was supposed to link all barangays nationwide through telephone services. The project was never completed; and around \$200 million worth of equipment are rotting and rusting in two Metro Manila warehouses, where the government continues to pay rent," it says.

Overprice

Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza and other top DOTC officials confirmed the report on the TSB equipment stockpile, but attempts by the INQUIRER to look into the warehouses and their contents have gone nowhere.

An official of the DOTC's Telecommunications Office, who requested anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media, says the department secured thousands of telephone units after the MTPO closed shop. However, only 538 units were actually used, he says, and the rest could not be accounted for.

Allegations of overpricing have been raised since the program to provide telephone facilities in impoverished regions in Mindanao and the Visayas and the Sierra Madre and Cordillera mountain regions on Luzon began. (See Timeline on Page A14)

Phase I of the project started in October 1998 and was to have been completed in August 2004. It called for the establishment of 2,460 telephone lines in 246 barangays in Negros Oriental, Lanao del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte, Nueva Vizcaya and Misamis Oriental.

Phone cards

Each barangay was to get at least three pay phones using phone cards for outgoing calls and one plain and ordinary telephone set for incoming calls. Villagers would have to go to the cities to buy phone cards to be able to use the telephones. For many, this meant travelling long distances.

Total project cost of Phase I was P1.5 billion, including a foreign loan component of \$24.99 million from the Export Development Corp. of Canada.

The website of the Commission on Information and Communications Technology (CICT) gives details of three phases of the project that called for the setting up of close to 9,000 telephone lines in 2,261 barangays from October 1998 to December 2002. Villagers were allowed to use it for free.

"They told us to get a card, but there were no phone cards for sale," says Lagala. The phone booth went out of commission shortly thereafter. Irrate residents later tore down the machine.

The CICT funding report was fuzzy. Through the years, about a dozen suppliers contracts were signed. Some of them were scrapped following claims of overpricing and others were renegotiated and scaled down. The initial plans were so fancy that the

blueprint included housing telephones in buildings with a toilet and other amenities and the construction of access roads.

Cost per telephone line ranged anywhere from around \$11,000 to \$33,000 although some private contractors had said at that time this could even be reduced to as low as \$800 to \$1,500.

Osmeña recalls that he was so incensed during budget hearings when he learned about proposed outlays and gave DOTC officials a hard time. Nothing came out of the blue ribbon inquiry.

"No final report was issued. Other members of the committee simply stonewalled," Osmeña says.

How did the proponents of the measure get away with it?

Silence of the graveyard

"The justifications of TSB project in the Senate were wonderful to hear," says Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr., when legislation was being debated. "Good words, we are never at a loss ... After that, silence at the TSB front. Dreadful silence. The silence of the graveyard."

"The jaded bureaucracy and the even jaded legislature need to be jolted into realizing that there is life even after corrupt deals—life behind bars, I hope, for the corrupt private contractors and their patrons in public offices," says Pimentel.

Roxas says no planning went into the project.

"Even without considering the allegations of corruption, the project itself could not succeed in its goal of bringing practical and efficient communication, as the basic infrastructure such as telephone lines had not been deliberated properly," Roxas says.

Deal gone sour

Mayor Jesus Lim of Salug town in Zamboanga says 92 units of the TSB orange colored booths were set up in 23 barangays in his municipality in 2000. Not one of them is working now. Lim says they are nothing more than "souvenirs" of a deal gone sour.

He referred to the DOTC's plan to revive the broadband plan and pursue the "last mile" connectivity.

"We need to be informed, explained and consulted first with this NBN. We've got some lessons and we don't want the funds to go to waste again, like these orange elephants."

Adds Mayor Edgardo Jamero of Dumanag in Zamboanga del Sur: "It's like a done deal. People from the telecommunications office just approached our office giving the list of barangays as recipients of the project. Not a single consultation was done."

Sixto Lagala, a 65-year-old farmer, says that at Barangay Kayok in Liloy, Zamboanga del Norte, a telephone line worked for about a month following its inauguration in 2000. Villagers were allowed to use it for free.

"They told us to get a card, but there were no phone cards for sale," says Lagala. The phone booth went out of commission shortly thereafter. Irrate residents later tore down the machine.

If it's any consolation, at least this village was able to use the telephone for at least a month. Those units in two Manila warehouses never saw the light of day and are simply rusting away. With reports from Riza Olchondra and Julie S. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao

Timeline: Telepono sa Barangay

1997—The Ramos administration signs a \$57-million deal for the "Telepono sa Barangay" (TSB) project with Alcatel Espana (which priced each telephone line at \$33,173.21—roughly P1.3 million), the French unit of Lucent Technologies (which charged \$20,256.11 per line), and the Canadian firm SR Telecoms (\$18,998.64 per line).

Dec. 23, 1999—Construction of TSB Phase IA begins. Feb. 3, 2000—Estrada announces that he will scrap the TSB project because of the allegedly overpriced contracts.

Feb. 8, 2000—The MTPO Project Management Office is dissolved.

Feb. 10, 2000—The Economic Coordinating Council, which Estrada ordered to review other contracts signed during the Ramos administration, decides to honor the contracts, apparently after the contract prices were brought down following renegotiations.

Jan. 11, 2001—TSB Phase II completes 15 percent, with a total of 2,613 telephone lines set up in 745 barangays of the Cordillera Administrative Region.

This Phase faced the following problems—the dissolution of the MTPO, the non-availability of peso allocation, and the expiration of the loan agreement with Credit de France/Standard Chartered Bank.

This Phase still awaits completion. It has so far cost the government P1.57 billion.

Dec. 23, 2002—TSB Phase IA is completed, costing P5.3 billion. A total of 6,350 telephone lines were installed in 1,270 barangays in Quezon, Lanao del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte, Nueva Vizcaya and Misamis Occidental.

August 2004—TSB Phase I is completed. A total of 2,460 telephone lines were installed in 246 barangays in Quezon, Negros Oriental, Lanao del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte, Nueva Vizcaya, and Misamis Occidental. The project cost: P1.54 billion.

Eliza Victoria, Inquirer Research

Palparan: There's no such policy; those are only perceptions

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

RETIRED MAJ. GEN. JOVITO PALPARAN said he had no policy of encouraging his men to abduct civilians suspected of being insurgents without due process and sufficient basis.

"Wala. Paanong may policy na ganyan? Perceptions lang nila yan (There's none. How can there be such a policy? Those are only their perceptions)," he said, referring to leftists.

He said human rights-related cases in the courts were "part of a continuing propaganda to pin us down."

"They're using me as an example para takutin ang mga general (to scare the generals). They want to tie down the AFP so that the succeeding officers would melt down or lie low," he said.

Of the court's order for the military to produce documents on the Manalo brothers' detention, Palparan said:

"How can I or the military produce documents when there is no detention."

Palparan said he neither knew nor met Raymond and Reynaldo Manalo in Bulacan in February 2006.

"Hindi. Sinasabi lang nila yan. Hindi ko lalala ang mga yan (No. They're only claiming that. I don't know them)," he said.

Palparan retired on Sept. 11, 2006 when he reached the mandatory retirement age of 56. His last stint was as chief of the Army's 7th Infantry Division, which has command over six battalions in Central Luzon's seven provinces.

The human rights group Karapatan had counted 71 victims of summary executions, five victims of massacres, 14 victims of frustrated killings and 46 forced disappearances during Palparan's one-year stint in Central Luzon.

The Kilusan para sa Pambansang Demokrasya reported that five of their leaders, mostly in Bataan, were killed

in the same period.

Praise from President

Despite being branded a "berdugo" (butcher), Palparan has consistently earned praise from the Arroyo administration for his supposed exemplary performance in counterinsurgency.

In her State of the Nation Address in 2006, Ms Arroyo praised Palparan, saying he "will not back down until the darkness of terror gives way to the dawn of freedom."

In 2004, he was sent to lead the Philippine military contingent assigned to conduct civic and medical operations in Iraq after his stint in Mindoro. That year, he was promoted to the rank of major general and appointed Army chief of staff.

In 2005, he was assigned chief of the 8th Infantry Division based in Eastern Visayas, where he was accused of being behind nearly 200 cases of killings,

disappearances, harassment, torture, and other rights violations.

Later in the year, he was relieved and transferred to head the 7th ID in Fort Magsaysay, Nueva Ecija. Within a month, 13 leaders and members of party-list group Bayan Muna and its affiliate organizations in Central Luzon were reported killed.

Melo Commission

Saying he left behind a "trail of blood or bodies in his wake wherever he was assigned," the Melo Commission report named Palparan "the prime suspect behind the extrajudicial killings" in the country, adding there was "circumstantial" evidence linking Palparan to the killings of leftists.

The commission was formed by Ms Arroyo in August 2006 in response to a clamor from several quarters, including the European Union, for the Philippine government to look into the

deaths of activists.

Early this year, Palparan tried but failed to get a congressional seat as the No. 1 nominee of party-list group Bantay.

Two missing UP students

He was also recently included as one of the respondents in the writ of amparo filed in October by Erlinda Cadapan and Concepcion Empeño, mothers of the two missing students of the University of the Philippines Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeño, who were purportedly kidnapped by the military in June 2006.

Born on Sept. 11, 1950 in Cagayan de Oro, Palparan grew up in his father's hometown in Malitbog, Southern Leyte.

He completed a bachelor's degree in business administration at the University of the East in Manila in 1971, and about two decades later, a master's degree in national security administration at the National Defense College of the Philippines. *Inquirer Research*

Court says Palparan knew of abductions

From page A1

praised Palparan in her State of the Nation Address last year for his relentless campaign against insurgents.

In the decision, the appellate court granted several of the remedies sought by the Manalo brothers in their petition for amparo, including the release of reports and medical records concerning them, but denied others such as a broad protection order against all military officials.

The writ of amparo requires respondents—whether government officials or agencies, or private individuals—to take action to resolve a grievance and not merely deny the allegations against them.

TRO from Supreme Court

The Manalo brothers earlier sought protection from the Supreme Court shortly after their escape in August from their captors. The high court then issued a temporary restraining order (TRO) stopping the defense secretary, the Armed Forces chief of staff and their agents from arresting or violating the rights of the brothers. The TRO is still in effect.

About two months after the TRO was issued, the brothers converted their petition in the Supreme Court into one for a writ of amparo, and the high court directed the Court of Appeals to hear the brothers' plea.

There was no question that the Manalo brothers were abducted in their house in San Ildefonso, Bulacan, on Feb. 14, 2006, and detained at various places until their escape, the appellate court said.

The court said it was convinced that the Manalo brothers were abducted because they were suspected of being members or sympathizers of the New People's Army, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

This was because their captors had been looking for a certain Ka Bestre, who turned out to be the Manalos' brother, Rolando.

Palparan met with Raymond

The court said Palparan knew the Manalo brothers were being detained by his men.

It also pointed out that neither Palparan nor other military personnel had contradicted the brothers' claim that Palparan had met with Raymond in a Bulacan safe house and issued statements about what he wanted Raymond and the latter's parents to do.

"General Palparan's participation in the abduction was also established. At the very least, he was aware of the petitioners' captivity at the hands of men in uniform assigned to his command ... (His) direct and personal role in the abduction might not have been shown but his knowledge of the dire situation of the petitioners during their long captivity at the hands of the military personnel under his command bespoke of his indubitable command policy that unavoidably encouraged and not merely tolerated the abduction of civilians without due process of law and without probable cause," it said.

Provost Marshal's superficial effort

The appellate court described as "superficial" the military's effort to look into the Manalos' abduction, pointing out that the Provost Marshal of the 7th Infantry Division only focused on the "one-sided version" of the Cagayan auxiliaries involved, when he should have interviewed the Manalos and assured them of evenhanded justice.

Even if Palparan had retired by the time the probe took place, the military command should still have subjected him to questioning to determine his liability, the court said.

"In this connection, therefore, the investigation of the abduction and forced disappearance of the petitioners for a long period of time, from Feb. 14, 2006, until Aug. 13, 2007, undertaken by the AFP [Armed Forces of the Philippines] High Command should have been more comprehensive and not left to the Provost Marshal who was obviously holding his punches (assuming he threw any).

"True, General Palparan has since retired from the active military service, but we do not think that he was immune from inquiry or investigation or that he was exempt from any personal liability, if warranted. At the very least,

cause I don't want to be implicated," he said.

Tabanao said he apologized to Lintuan on Nov. 30.

"I went to his office in dxGO and I apologized for not picking up a passenger. It was really not my intention but I had a previous commitment at the time," Tabanao said.

He said Lintuan had forgiven him and even wrote a note for the Land Transportation Office, which was heard-



PALPARAN

JOAN BONDOC

General Palparan and his men, especially those of the latter who are still in the active service of the AFP, should have been subjected to a more intense investigation," the court said.

The military had contended that the Manalos were abducted as a result of a feud with a family surnamed Mendoza because the elder brother of Raymond and Reynaldo had been accused of killing the Mendoza patriarch.

Produce records

In its decision, the appellate court directed Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro and AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon to:

- Give the court and the Manalos within five days the "official and unofficial reports" of the investigation conducted in connection with the case.

- Produce the medical reports, records and charts of any treatment and medicine given or prescribed to the brothers, as well as a list of military personnel who attended to them during their detention.

(This was in light of Raymond's claim that Palparan made him take a drug called "Alive," which made him more open to suggestion. The court also found that there was torture "of some degree" committed on the brothers and that their captors allowed certain persons to minister to their injuries from the torture.)

ing the case against him.

Nograles said he hoped that the additional bounty would encourage more witnesses to surface and help solve the crime.

So far, authorities have found one witness, a 9-year-old boy.

PO3 Jeffrey Bangcas, lead investigator of the Sta. Ana police precinct, said the boy had provided the police with information, including what one of the suspects looked like.

• Confirm in writing the places where MSgt. Rizal Hilario and Donald Caigas are officially assigned. They are among those the brothers earlier tagged as their abductors.

The court said it was established that Hilario was the one who drove the vehicle used to transfer the brothers from one place to another.

It noted that Hilario was among four master sergeants Palparan talked to when the latter directed Raymond to take the medicine, and that the brothers saw Hilario take part in the torture.

Beyond Esperon's control

The court, however, noted that Palparan was already beyond the control of Teodoro and Esperon in connection with the Manalos' request for the confirmation of the whereabouts of military officers named respondents in their earlier habeas corpus case.

The appellate court also said it could not issue the order sought by the Manalos to restrain Teodoro, Esperon and people under their command from approaching, communicating or placing them under surveillance.

Though it understood the brothers' fears for their safety, such an order would be too broad and would be tantamount to castigating the entire military organization "for the mistakes committed by the misguided few," the court said.

With regard to the Manalos' request for an order to inspect several military camps where they had been kept at one time or another, the appellate court said the brothers were already free and there was no pressing need to grant the request as it would serve no practical purpose.

"It is respectfully opined that the need to inspect should be timely raised in the proceedings that may be commenced before the proper forum to prosecute those responsible for the abduction and captivity," it said.

The court also denied the brothers' request for a list of the names, pictures and contact addresses of all organic military personnel assigned to the 7th Infantry Division, 24th Infantry Battalion and 69th Infantry Battalion.

It said the list would not solve any

IN THE KNOW

Justice Lucas Bersamin

ABRA-BORN JUSTICE LUCAS
Bersamin, 58, was appointed to the Court of Appeals by President Macapagal-Arroyo on March 10, 2003.

After finishing high school at St. Joseph Seminary in Banguey, Abra, in 1965, he went to the University of the Philippines-Diliman and graduated in 1968 with a bachelor's degree in Political Science.

He took up law in the University of the East, completing his course in 1973 and placing ninth in the bar examinations of that year.

He practiced law from 1974 as a member of the Puruganan, Lizardo and Bersamin Law Office until his appointment by President Corazon Aquino in November 1986 as judge of the Regional Trial Court, Branch 96, in Quezon City.

Bersamin was then only 37, making him the youngest RTC judge in Metro Manila.

In 2000, the Chief Justice Fred Ruiz Castro Memorabilia Commission awarded Bersamin the Best Decision in Civil Law and the Best Decision in Criminal Law based on the recommendations of two separate and independent judging committees made up of incumbent and retired members of the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals and the Sandiganbayan.

It was the first time the same judge won in the two categories the same year. The feat has not been equaled.

In 2002, he was recognized by the Foundation For Judicial Excellence as Outstanding RTC Judge, earning him the Chief Justice Jose Abad Santos Award for Judicial Excellence. *Eliza Victoria, Inquirer Research*

matter relevant to the case and would compromise the personnel's safety, adding that not all military personnel were involved in the abduction.

"Besides, there is an overriding need to insulate the integrity of the AFP commands from being weakened through unnecessary disclosure of the identities of their personnel and assets," the court said.

Bounty for killer of Lintuan now P1M

From page A1

ing the investigation, a taxi driver, who figured in an altercation with Lintuan on Nov. 28, appeared before them to deny involvement in the killing of the broadcaster.

Tito Tabanao Jr. said he was worried, especially after his brush with Lintuan was mentioned in news reports.

"My wife asked me to come and clear my name. I was also worried be-

cause I don't want to be implicated," he said.

Tabanao said he apologized to Lintuan on Nov. 30.

"I went to his office in dxGO and I apologized for not picking up a passenger. It was really not my intention but I had a previous commitment at the time," Tabanao said.

He said Lintuan had forgiven him and even wrote a note for the Land Transportation Office, which was heard-

"The boy also said that one of the perpetrators even asked him what time Lintuan would come out of the station," Bangcas said.

Victoria Lintuan-Reyes, Ferdie's eldest sister, said she was patiently waiting for the results of the investigation.

The Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC) said the arrest of the gunman could pave the way for the identification of the mastermind.

"Extrajudicial killings will not stop until we get the perpetrators, the hired killer and the mastermind," Dante Jimenez of the VACC told reporters at Lintuan's wake here yesterday.

"Again, we urgently call on law enforcement agencies to fast-track the investigation to track down the killer of Ferdie Lintuan. We hope this case will not end up like the previous cases of murdered journalists—unsolved and forgotten," he said.

Nene slams ethnic slur on Visayans in Juday movie

From page A1

The movie, written and directed by Jose Javier Reyes and produced by Star Cinema, is one of the top grossing movies in the ongoing 33rd Metro Manila Film Festival.

Sen. Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr. said the scene "smacks of an ethnic slur" and "offends the sensibilities of the Visayans and other non-Tagalog speaking citizens."

In the movie, a grandmother, played by Gloria Diaz, scolds the nanny of her 4-year-old grandchild by saying: "Bakit pinapalaki ninyong Bisaya ang apo ko? (Why are you bringing up my grandchild as a Bisaya?)."

The child's mother, played by Santos, butts in and tells the nanny:

"Speak to the kid in Tagalog. Para Pinoy. (So he grows up Pinoy.)"

Pimentel said the conversation was "insensitive" and "arrogant" and called on the Lopez-owned Star Cinema to apologize and delete the scene from the movie.

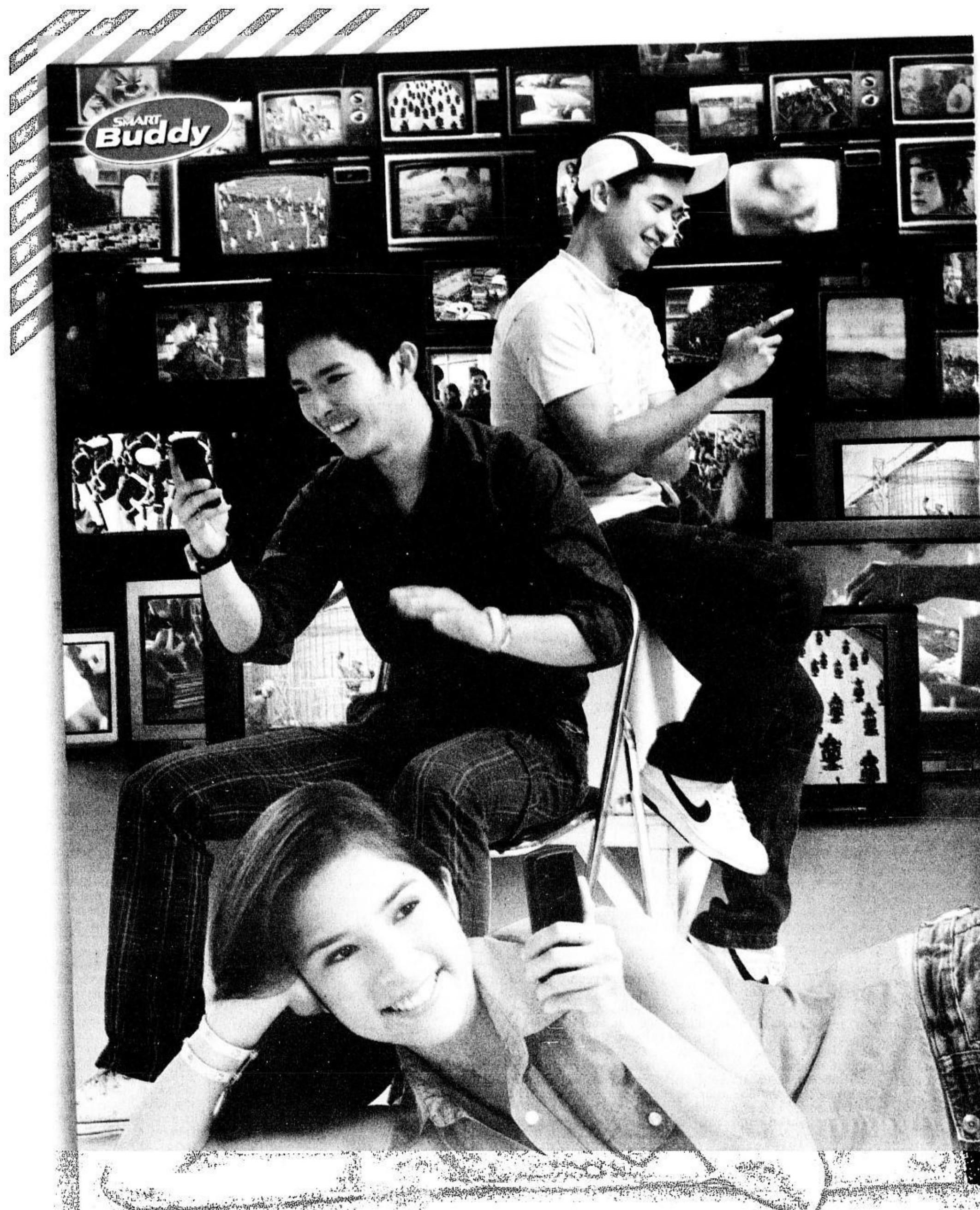
Thank you, sir

Reyes, the director of "Sakal, Sakal, Saklolo," said he was thankful Pimentel went "out of his way to watch 'SSS' and for being supportive of the movie industry."

"I wish he would also stop the movies of Senators (Ramon) Revilla Jr. and Jinggoy Estrada, his peers in the Senate," Reyes, who also wrote the movie script, told the *Inquirer* yesterday. "After that, magpahinga na siya (he should rest). With the country's

many problems, I'm sure he'll be really busy after the holidays."

Pimentel,



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Housing firm to appeal court ruling

Ayala says patented building technology taken from foreign companies

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

AVIDA LAND CORP., THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING arm of property giant Ayala Land Inc. (ALI), will file an appeal if a trial court orders it to pay P140 million in damages to inventor Edgardo Vazquez for alleged breach of patent rights.

ALI corporate spokesperson and deputy compliance officer Alfonso Reyes said, in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, that ALI would pursue "all available appellate remedies to protect its rights and interests" if the decision of the Quezon City regional trial court was confirmed to be adverse to the company.

In his decision, a copy of which was obtained by the media, Judge Reynaldo Daway of Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 90 ordered Avida to pay Vazquez, president of Vazquez Building Systems Inc., more than P90 million as "temperate damages or reasonable royalty with interest of six percent per annum from the time the infringement case was filed."

The judge also directed Avida to stop immediately the use of "Vazbuilt technology" in its housing projects.

Avida said both technologies were also patented abroad.

"These two systems involve building processes and end products that are different from the housing unit described in Mr. Vazquez's patent," Reyes said.

Vazquez sued Avida in 1999 for allegedly copying the process of assembling an exterior wall structure of a modular housing unit that businessman invented in 1994.

Avida allegedly copied Vazquez columns featuring H-shaped sections and wall panels for the Sta. Isabel Village in Lucena City in Quezon province.

The complainant asked for P300 million in damages.

Avida denied the accusations, saying it used the modular building system of British firm Tex Holdings Plc. and French builder Maison Individuelles SA.

In his decision, Daway said the columns and concrete wall panels Avida used in its housing projects in Tayabas, Quezon; Naga City; Sto. Tomas, Batangas; Trece Martirez, Cavite and Cebu City were "substantially similar or identical in appearance and construction" to Vazquez's invention.

Daway also noted that the differences or dissimilarities in design "can hardly be noticed."

4 Metro cities launch drive vs firecrackers

By Kristine Alave
and Julie M. Aurelio

FOUR CITIES IN METRO Manila are helping the health department's campaign reduce the number of New Year's Eve casualties by regulating, even banning, the use of firecrackers.

The cities of Pasig and Marikina have banned large and dangerous firecrackers, especially on New Year's Eve, to reduce the number of injuries and deaths resulting from its use.

San Juan City, on the other hand, intensified its campaign against illegal and dangerous fireworks.

There will be only sparklers and fountains, no *superlolo* or *plapla*, the all-time favorites, in Muntilupa City on New Year's Eve.

Pasig City Mayor Robert "Bobby" Eusebio said barangay captains in the city would be informed of the ban that went into effect starting Friday.

Marikina City Mayor Marides Fernando's "Oplan Silent Night," launched with the local police, also bans firecrackers.

Police chief Supt. Sotero Ramos Jr. said policemen were monitoring establishments selling firecrackers. Fernando and Ramos enjoined residents to use safer noisemakers when greeting the new year.

The mayor added that the city would have a grand fireworks display that would be open to the public.

Meanwhile, San Juan City Mayor Joseph Victor Ejercito said that although the city has

Ayala-Makati Avenues closed to traffic tonight

By Julie M. Aurelio

PARTS OF AYALA AND MAKATI Avenues will be closed to traffic beginning at 10 tonight as Makati City prepares for the annual New Year's Eve countdown.

Department of Public Safety chief Hermenegildo San Miguel said the stretch of Ayala Avenue from Makati Avenue to Paseo de Roxas would be affected, as well as portions of Makati Avenue from Paseo de Roxas to Ayala Avenue.

Work crews will construct tonight the main stage, measuring 60 feet by 40 feet, and install lighting and sound systems and set up food booths.

Some of the alternate routes:

not banned fireworks, he advised residents to handle these correctly. He added that with the help of the local police, the campaign against illegal firecrackers had been strengthened.

Muntinlupa Mayor Aldrin San Pedro yesterday warned merchants not to sell prohibited and dangerous firecrackers, especially to minors.

San Pedro said the selling of powerful firecrackers like *sawa*, *superlolo* and *plapla*, declared dangerous by the police, would be strictly regulated.

The mayor said even the sale of small *watusi*, which had poisoned some children, would also be restricted.

San Pedro initially wanted Muntinlupa to be declared a no-firecracker zone, but the move failed.

"We are also aware that it would be difficult to declare a total ban because of business concerns," he said.

While the proposal did not push through, San Pedro said the police would inspect establishments to see if they had permits to sell firecrackers.

The mayor launched recently the "Huwag Magpaputok" campaign, asking residents not to use firecrackers to welcome the New Year.

Streamers and billboards will be put up to remind city residents about the campaign.

San Pedro, however, said he would allow the sale of "relatively safe pyrotechnics" like fountains and sparklers, but not to minors.

The mayor added that the city would have a grand fireworks display that would be open to the public.

Meanwhile, San Juan City Mayor Joseph Victor Ejercito said that although the city has

Passenger buses coming from the Light Rail Transit should take Buendia Avenue. Buses from Edsa/Ayala Avenue can turn right on Buendia.

Buses from Edsa can also turn right on Arnaiz Avenue, right on Paseo de Roxas and left on Ayala Avenue. Passenger jeepneys from Washington/Buendia can make a right on Ayala Avenue and another right on Salcedo Street. Others coming from Edsa/Ayala can use Buendia Avenue.

Private vehicles coming from LRT/South Superhighway/Buendia going to the Central Business District can turn right on Ayala Avenue, then right on Paseo de Roxas.

Some of the alternate routes:

DID YOU KNOW

FOURTEEN people were killed and 91 more were hurt in synchronized bombings in different parts of Metro Manila on Dec. 30, 2000. The targets included a Light Rail Transit coach, Plaza Ferguson in front of the US Embassy in Manila, an abandoned gasoline station in Makati City, a passenger bus in Cubao, Quezon City, and the cargo handling section of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Pasay City. Captured in 2002 for illegal possession of explosives was Jemaah Islamiyah member Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi, an Indonesian who admitted funding the attacks. He was sentenced in April 2002 to 12 years in prison, but escaped in 2003 from with two suspected Abu Sayyaf members. They were later killed by soldiers.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research



NEW TOYS FOR THE NEW YEAR

These sisters enjoy a perfect day at Manila's Rizal Park playing with their new toys.

EDWIN BACASMAS

BDO

Banking Schedule for the Holidays:

DECEMBER 24, 2007 (Monday)

OPEN UP TO 2:00 PM

A. Mabilis - Biñan	Cebu - Tebunok	Iloilo - Ledesma	Meycauayan - Zamora	San Fernando - Pampanga Dolores
Alunan Highway - Tlacurong	CM Recto - Lipa	Isabela - Santiago	Montilla - Buluan	San Pedro
Angeles - Balibago	Cogon - Cagayan de Oro	La Union - Fernando	Naga	Sta. Ana - Davao City
Angeles City - Miranda	Dagupan - Fernandez	Laoag - Balintawak St.	Navotas	Subic - Times Square
Antipolo - Masinag	Dagupan - Perez	Laoag - Castro	North Calamba - Crossing	Tanboan
Batangas - R. Burgos	Davao - Magaysay	Lapasan - Cagayan de Oro	North Mandaua	Tabora
Better Living - Cadiz	Davao - Rizal	Legaspi City	Olongapo - Rizal Avenue	Tacloban
Cabahug Cadiz	Digos - Rizal Avenue	Lipa	Ozamis City	Tagbilaran
Cabanatuan - Maharlika Road	Dipolog - Quazon Avenue	Lipa - Rotonda	P Burgos - Batangas City	Tagum - Rizal St.
Caceres - Naga	Dumaguete	Lucena	Polawan	Tarlac
Cagayan de Oro - Cogon	EDSA Cubao	Megallanes SL - Surigao	Pasig	Tarlac - F. Tañedo
Calococan	Enriquez - Lucena	Makakus - Colabato	Pioneer SL - General Santos	Toril - Davao City
Capitol Shopping Bacolod	Fuente - Osmena	Malabon	R. Alunan - Koronadal	Tuguegarao - Bonifacio St.
Carmen Planas	General Santos - Santiago	Malolos - Congreso	Rizal Avenue	Urdaneta
Cebu - Gorordo	Grace Park - 8th Avenue	Markina	Rizal St. - Zamboanga	Vigan - Quezon Avenue
Cebu - Magallanes	Iligan - Del Pilar	Mayo Jardon - Zamboanga City	San Carlos - Negros Occidental	

OPEN UP TO 3:00 PM - All SM Mall & Dept. Store branches plus the following branches:

Bacooran	Cabanatuan - Megacentre Mall	Greenhills Shopping Center	Robinson's Place - Lipa	Sta. Lucia East - Calinta
Baguio - Abenao Square Mall	Cash & Carry	New Farmers Plaza	Robinson's Place - Manila	Tutuban
Big R Novaliches	Cebu - Ayala Center	Robinson's Galleria	Rockwell	V - Mall
Bonifacio Global City	Cebu - Elizabeth Mall	Robinson's Metro East	Shangri-La Plaza Mall	

OPEN UP TO 6:00 PM - NAIA & NAIA 1

DECEMBER 29, 2007 (Saturday)

REGULAR BANKING HOURS - All Saturday banking branches and Baguio - Abenao Square

OPEN UP TO 2:00 PM

Caloocan	Harrison Plaza	Manggahan	Pedro Gil - Singalong
Century Park - Adriatico	M. da Santos - Ilaya	Ortigas Avenue - Pasig	Quintin Paredes

DECEMBER 30, 2007 (Sunday)

OPEN UP TO 2:00 PM

Caloocan	Grace Park - 8th Avenue	Rizal Avenue
Century Park - Adriatico	Navotas	Sto. Cristo Commerce

OPEN UP TO 3:00 PM - All Sunday banking branches and Cabanatuan - Mega Center Mall

OPEN UP TO 6:00 PM - NAIA & NAIA 1

DECEMBER 31, 2007 (Monday)

OPEN UP TO 2:00 PM

A. Mabilis - Biñan	CM Recto - Lipa	La Union	North Calamba - Crossing
Agdiao - Davao City	Dagupan - Fernandez	Laoag - San Fernando	North Mandaua
Angeles - Balibago	Dagupan - Perez	Laoag - Balintawak St.	Olongapo - Rizal Avenue
Angeles City - Miranda	Davao - Lizada	Laoag - Castro	Ozamis City
Beclaran	Digos - Rizal Avenue	Lipa	Palawan
Balangas - R. Burgos	Digos - Rizal Avenue	Lipa - Rotonda	Pioneer SL - General Santos
Cabanatuan - Maharlika Road	Dumaguete	Makakus - Colabato	Quezon Avenue - Iligan
Cagayan de Oro - Cogon	EDSA Cubao	Marcos Highway Sumulong	Quezon Avenue - Lucena
Cagayan de Oro - Xavier	Fuente - Osmena	Mayor Jardon - Zamboanga City	Rizal St. - Legazpi City
Capitol Shopping Bacolod	General Luna - Naga	Meycauayan - Zamora	San Carlos - Pampanga
Carmen Planas	General Santos - Santiago	Montilla - Butuan	San Fernando - Pampanga Dolores
Cebu - Gorordo	Isabel - Santiago	Naga - General Luna	San Pedro
Cebu - Magallanes	Iznart - Iloilo	Kumintang - Batangas City	Subic - Times Square
Cebu - Tabunok	CM Recto - Davao City		
Cebu - Tebunok	Cebu - Elizabeth Mall	Robinson's Metro East	Shangri-La Plaza Mall
Cebu - Ayala Center	New Farmers Plaza	Robinson's Place - Lipa	Sta. Lucia East - Calinta
Cebu - Elizabeth Mall	Robinson's Galleria	Robinson's Place - Manila	Tutuban
Cebu - Ayala Center	Cash & Carry	Rockwell	Tutuban Center Mall - CM Recto

OPEN UP TO 6:00 PM - NAIA & NAIA 1



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INVITATION FOR BIDS

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STRATEGIC VALIDATION SERVICES
OF TAXPAYERS' REGISTRATION

(For the clean-up of the Taxpayer Registration Database by minimizing, if not totally eradicating, the stop filer cases. In line with this, the required manpower service will be outsourced to assist BIR in reducing the number of stop filer cases and at the same time assist the team in the implementation of the reform program.)

Loan No. 7431-PH

1. The Government of the Philippines (GOP) has received a Loan from the World Bank through the National Program Support for Tax Administration Reform Project (NPSTAR) Fund toward the cost of the Tax Compliance Component and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this Loan to payments under the contract for the Registration Database Clean Up STRATEGIC VALIDATION SERVICES OF TAXPAYERS' REGISTRATION / BAC-TRA Bidding No. 2008-01.

2. The Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the procurement of the service mentioned above to sustain a clean and accurate registration database, to validate physical existence/inexistence of inactive taxpayers, to validate operation/non-operation of unregistered taxpayers; and to assist the Tax Reform Administration Group (TRAG) in the preparation and evaluation of documents necessary for the effective implementation of the BIR Reform Agenda. Delivery of the SERVICE is required within one (1) month from issuance of Notice to Proceed (NTP). The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, Instructions to Bidders (ITB).

3. The procurement will be conducted through the government open competitive procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria specified under the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of the Republic Act No. 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, with some amendments as stated in these Bidding Documents and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to RA 5183 and subject to Commonwealth Act 138. Only bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) is Six Million Pesos (P 6,000,000.00). Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening.

4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from BIR thru the BAC-TRA Secretariat and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM, on working days from Mondays to Fridays.

5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon cash payment to the BIR Cashier of a non-refundable fee in the amount of P 6,000.00. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

6. The BIR will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on January 11, 2008, 2:00pm at the Executive Conference Room, 3rd Floor, National Office Building, BIR Compound, BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City.

7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered at the address below on or before January 23, 2008, 2:00 pm. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in the form and amount (or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency) as stated in Section 22.1 of the Bid Data Sheet (BDS). Late Bids shall not be accepted.

8. Bid opening shall be on January 23, 2008, 2:00 pm at the Executive Conference Room, 3rd Floor, National Office Building, BIR Compound, BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

9. The BIR assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid. The BIR also reserves the right to reject any or all bids and accept the bids most advantageous to the government.

10. The BIR reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE

Victoria V. Santos

Assistant Commissioner-ISOS

Chair, Bids and Awards Committee

For Tax Reform Administration (BAC-TRA)

Rm. 308, 3rd Floor,

Revenue Computer Center (RCC) Building,

BIR Compound, BIR Road, Diliman, 0820 Quezon City

Tel No. (02) 981-7077/Fax No. (02) 928-3235

e-mail addresses : bac-tra@bir.gov.ph,

lilibeth.maranan@bir.gov.ph

Website: www.bir.gov.ph

(Sgd.) VICTORIA V. SANTOS
Assistant Commissioner-ISOS
Chair, BAC-TRA

(PDI - December 28, 2007)

A18

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

METRO

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2007

Resort owner killed in QC

By Jeannette I. Andrade

A 38-YEAR-OLD OWNER OF A travel lodge in the popular resort town of Boracay was killed by a lone gunman Wednesday evening in Quezon City.

His 9-year-old adopted daughter was also hurt in the

incident. Ricky Sacapano of Block 1, Lot 7, Sto. Niño Street, Greenfields 3 Subdivision, Barangay San Agustin, in Novaliches, died instantly from gunshots in the head and body.

His daughter Bianca was hit by a stray bullet in the right palm and was taken to the Quezon City General Hospital for treatment.

SPO1 Leonardo Pasco of the Quezon City Police District Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit said the incident occurred around 7 p.m. while the two were walking near their home accompanied by Randy Pascual, a friend of Sacapano, and two other children.

Pasco said the unidentified gunman, armed with a .38 caliber revolver, attacked the group at the corner of Sto. Niño Street and Don Alejandro Avenue. The suspect shot Sacapano in the back. As the victim fell, his attacker shot him three more times in the head. One of the bullets ricocheted and hit the girl in the hand.

The killer then fled from the scene, with the victim's companions unable to do anything.

Pasco said the suspect could have been hired to kill the victim over an old grudge or a land dispute.

But the QCPD-CIDU investigator did not discuss a possible motive behind the killing because follow up operations were underway.

METROBRIEFS

Car theft charges filed vs 9 Manila cops

NINE Manila policemen were indicted for car theft in the Manila Regional Trial Court yesterday after they allegedly took a man's jeepney in 2003. Assistant City Prosecutor Anne Geraldine Agar ordered the filing of violation of RA 6539 (Anti-Carnapping Law) charges against the policemen when they failed to appear in the preliminary investigation of the cases filed by Bernard Carpio. The complainant claimed that SPO1 Romeo Norfega, SPO1 Reynaldo Casem Jr., PO3 Armando Casem, PO3 Geronimo Opelac, PO2 Cuberjon Cruz, PO2 Ranie Dionisio, PO1 Marcel Suraga, PO1 Arthur Cordero and SPO3 Enrico Palomar III blocked his way around 6 p.m. of June 23 while he was driving his jeepney with his son. Carpio alleged that he was arrested by the nine policemen, former members of the Manila Police District drug enforcement group, and was brought to Paco Park, where he was told to sign transfer of ownership papers in exchange for his freedom. Refusing to do so, Carpio said he was taken to the MPD headquarters on United Nations Avenue, where Palomar reportedly took out a sachet of shabu from his drawer and said it would be used against him. Carpio also filed complaints of physical injuries, illegal arrest, robbery extortions and planting of evidence against the policemen, but these were dismissed by the assistant city prosecutor. The complainant, noted Agar in her resolution, was caught in a "buy-bust operation" and did not support his complaint with a medical certificate. She said the policemen were also unable to acquire ownership of the jeepney. Neither did they have any motive that would make them resort to planting evidence, she added.

Allison W. Lopez

Chiro youth group marks 50th year

THE CHIRO Youth Movement in Pasig City is celebrating its 50th golden Anniversary on Dec. 29-30 at the Pasig Catholic College grounds. Past and present members are invited to participate in the anniversary rites. Chiro Pasig, a youth based group, was established by Fr. Danny Van der Portaelle, CICM at the Immaculate Conception Parish in 1957. The church organization has scheduled a series of activities, including a Holy Mass and program, on Saturday at 6:30 p.m. and a motorcade at 8 a.m. on Sunday. For more inquiries, please contact Tita Raymundo (09186707407) and Romy Saguisag (09202142485).

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Region IX, Zamboanga Peninsula
DIVISION OF ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE
Dipolog City
Tel. nos. 212-2604 & 212-2605
Fax Nos. 212-2604 & 212-2607
E-mail Address: nelfa_acopiado@yahoo.com

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Education, Division of Zamboanga del Norte, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project : SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF SCHOOL FURNITURE CY 2007

Location : Various Schools in Zamboanga del Norte Division

Brief Description : All Wood

	Tables and Chairs	Teacher's Table	Armchairs	Approved Budget for the Contract
Package A (1st District)	350 sets	22 sets	400 units	P 1,106,000.00
Package B (2nd District)	675 sets	44 sets	850 units	2,199,000.00
Package C (3rd District)	875 sets	57 sets	1,100 units	2,865,000.00
TOTAL	1,900 sets	123 sets	2,350 units	P 6,170,000.00

ABC & Funding Source : GOP through the GAA FY 2007

Contract Duration : One hundred seventy calendar days

Delivery Period :

1st delivery (50%) – April 28, 2008

2nd delivery (50%) – June 27, 2008

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations of R.A. 9184 known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interests or outstanding capital stocks belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act 5183. Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II, Instruction to Bidders of the Bidding Documents.

For Bidders outside this province are required to submit Mayor's Permit from any municipality of Zamboanga del Norte.

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

Activity	Date	Venue
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	Dec. 26, 2007 to Jan. 17, 2008	ASDS Office
2. Pre-bid Conference	Jan. 15, 2008	ASDS Office
3. Deadline of Submission of Bids	Jan. 29, 2008 – 1:00 PM	ASDS Office
4. Opening of Bids	Jan. 29, 2008 – 2:00 PM	ASDS Office

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of FIVE THOUSAND PESOS only (P5,000.00) to the ZN Division Cashier.

The Department of Education, Zamboanga del Norte Division BAC reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Approved by:
(Sgd.) NELFA A. ACOPADIO, Ed. D.
BAC Chairman

(PDI - December 28, 2007)

PROMO MECHANICS:

Bibigyan kayo ng Cash sa Pelikula card pag kayo'y manonood ng pelikula ng MMFF 2007 mula Dec. 25, 2007 hanggang January 7, 2008.

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Pwedeng i-hulog ang inyong card at any official dropbox at participating theaters.

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Per DTI-NCR Permit # 5089 Series of 2007.

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Japan to amend textbook entries on Okinawa's WWII mass suicides

TOKYO—JAPAN'S EDUCATION Ministry announced Wednesday that it would partly reinstate references in textbooks to the military's role in forcing civilians to commit mass suicide during the Battle of Okinawa in the final months of World War II.

Faced with protests from Okinawa, the ministry said that high school textbooks to be used in the next academic year would acknowledge the military's "involvement" in the mass suicides. But the ministry stopped short of putting back original references to the military's "coercing" or "forcing" Okinawans into com-

mitting mass suicides, saying that no supporting documents had been found.

In April, under the administration of Shinzo Abe, the nationalist former prime minister, education officials said textbooks would be cleansed of longtime references to the military. The decision caused an uproar among Okinawans who, during World War II, were brainwashed by Japanese soldiers into believing that they would be slaughtered by invading Americans and that mass suicides were preferable. Thousands are believed to have com-

mitted suicide in villages occupied by Japanese soldiers; mass suicides did not take place where there were no soldiers.

In October, after a huge protest was held in Okinawa and Abe was succeeded by a centrist, Yasuo Fukuda, education officials said they would reconsider further changes to the references—contradicting their longstanding assertion that the country's history textbooks are not influenced by politics.

The contents of Japan's history textbooks have long been a source of tension with China and South Korea, which have

accused Tokyo of trying to whitewash its militarist past. But the ministry's plan to revise explanations about the Battle of Okinawa signaled for the first time that the issue of textbooks had become a political problem domestically.

Last month, textbook publishers submitted passages reinserting references to the military's "coercing" or "forcing" Okinawans into mass suicide. But the ministry rejected this clear description of the military's role, effectively opting for the softer reference to the military's "involvement."

NYT

Turkish planes strike rebels in northern Iraq

ANKARA/SULAIMANIYA—TURKISH warplanes bombed Kurdish targets in northern Iraq on Wednesday, Turkey's general staff said, in the fourth such cross-border raid in five days.

Nato member Turkey says it has the right under international law to hit rebels of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) who take shelter in northern Iraq and have mounted attacks inside Turkey that have killed dozens of troops in recent months.

The Turkish military said its offensive against the outlawed PKK inside Turkey and across the border in northern Iraq would continue. Tensions over northern Iraq helped send oil up to \$96 a barrel, a one-month high.

The Iraqi government and US forces say they support Turkey's right to strike at the PKK, who yearn for a separate Kurdish homeland, but want any action to be coordinated with them and small in scale to avoid destabilizing northern Iraq.

Reuters

In a separate incident, six PKK members were killed in clashes with troops in the Turkish border province of Sirnak on Wednesday, the military said in a statement.

Turkish aircraft also struck targets across northern Iraq on Saturday, Sunday and Tuesday. The campaign began with a larger bombing raid on Dec. 16 that killed more than 150 PKK guerrillas, according to the military.

The United States, which must tread carefully to balance its regional interests, has begun providing Turkey with intelligence on the PKK in northern Iraq after coming under pressure from Ankara for failing to crack down on the rebels.

Ankara blames the PKK—considered a terrorist organization by Turkey, the United States and the European Union—for the deaths of nearly 40,000 people since it began an armed struggle for a separate Kurdish homeland in 1984.

TATIANA, a Siberian tiger that killed one person and injured two others, is seen in an undated photo. It was later shot dead. REUTERS

San Fo cops look for clues on how zoo tiger escaped

SAN FRANCISCO—NOW CONSIDERED a crime scene, the San Francisco Zoo was closed to visitors on Wednesday as police investigators swept the grounds searching for evidence to explain how a Siberian tiger escaped its open-air grotto on Tuesday, killing one young man and seriously injuring two others.

Investigators intend to interview the survivors, two brothers ages 19 and 23, who were in shock but in stable condition after surgery to clean wounds from "deep claw and tooth attacks," said a doctor during a news conference in San Francisco General Hospital. The identity of the brothers has not been revealed.

The tiger, a 300-pound female Siberian named Tatiana who attacked her trainer last December, was shot to death by the police after the zoo's 5 p.m. closing on Tuesday, when the cat somehow jumped barriers around the

Lion House habitat, and killed Carlos Sousa Jr., 17, of San Jose.

The police said they were trying to determine whether the tiger escaped because of negligence or equipment failure or if it was somehow provoked to jump the 18-foot wall around the grotto.

The director of the zoo, Manuel Mollinedo, along with a city official who was monitoring the matter, strongly suggested on Wednesday that the tiger must have been lured or provoked and somehow assisted, perhaps inadvertently, to scale a barrier that had never before been breached.

"Something happened to get that cat agitated, to do what it did," Mollinedo said. "She was a very mellow cat. I never saw her down in that moat, although she has access to it. Something triggered her to jump out of there or she grabbed onto something and pulled herself over."

NYT

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Prominent deaths of 2007

Politics

- Bo Yibo, veteran of China's communist revolution, at 98 in Beijing (Jan. 15).
- Hrant Dink, Turkish journalist of Armenian origin, murdered aged 53 in Istanbul (Jan. 19).
- Maurice Papon, former top French civil servant who collaborated with the Nazis in World War II, aged 96 (Feb. 17).
- Boris Yeltsin, Russia's first post-Soviet president, aged 76 from a heart attack in a Moscow hospital. (April 23).
- Malietoa Tanumafili II, monarch of the Pacific island state of Samoa and the world's oldest ruling head of state, aged 94 in the capital Apia. (May 11)
- Italian opera singer Luciano Pavarotti, aged 71 in his native town of Modena (Sept. 6).
- Jane Wyman, US actress and first wife of US president Ronald Reagan, aged 93 (Sept. 10).
- Marcel Marceau, French mime artist, aged 84 (Sept. 22).
- Deborah Kerr, aged 86, Scottish actress who starred in "From Here to Eternity" (Oct. 16).
- South African reggae star Lucky Dube, one of Africa's biggest-selling artists, shot dead in Johannesburg aged 43 (Oct. 19).
- US novelist Norman Mailer, aged 84 in New York (Nov. 10).
- Maurice Bejart, French choreographer, aged 80 in Lausanne. (Nov. 22).
- US motorcycle stunt artist Evel Knievel, aged 69 in Florida. (Nov. 30)
- Karlheinz Stockhausen, the German composer, aged 79 in Kuerden in western Germany. (Dec. 7).
- Oscar Peterson, the legendary jazz pianist and composer, of kidney failure aged 82 near Toronto. (Dec. 23).
- Bollywood veteran film producer G.R. Sippy, in Mumbai aged of 93 of age-related ailments. (Dec. 25).

Business

- Momofuku Ando, the Japanese inventor of instant noodles, aged 96 in Tokyo (Jan. 5).
- Anita Roddick, founder of the Body Shop cosmetics chain, aged 64 in Chichester, England of a brain hemorrhage. (Sept. 10).
- Tony Ryan, Irish co-founder of low-cost airline Ryanair, aged 71 at home in Ireland following a long illness (Oct. 3).
- Tota Miah, the Bangladeshi "snake king," who started the country's first commercial snake farm, of snake bite aged 38. (Nov. 4)
- Former General Motors chief executive Roger Smith, who notably featured in Michael Moore's film "Roger and Me," aged 82 (Nov. 30).

Culture

- Carlo Ponti, Italian film producer who married actress Sophia Loren, aged 94 in Geneva hospital (Jan. 10).
- Art Buchwald, US newspaper columnist, at home in Washington aged 81 (Jan. 17).
- Omkar Prasad Nayyar, Bollywood music maker, aged 80, of a heart attack (Jan. 28).
- Anna Nicole Smith, US pop-culture icon, aged 39 in a Florida hotel room (Feb. 8).
- Luigi Comencini, Italian filmmaker, aged 90 (April 6).
- Kurt Vonnegut, science-

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 5772 Series of 2007

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Afghanistan expels EU, UN officials

KABUL—A SENIOR UNITED NATIONS OFFICIAL and another from the European Union left Afghanistan on Thursday after the government ordered their expulsion, accusing both of holding talks with the Taliban and for paying cash to the group.

The expulsions have caused a diplomatic row between the government and key aid agencies who fear the loss of two such experienced Afghan hands could hinder reconstruction and development efforts.

United Nations spokesperson

Aleem Siddique said the UN staffer had left on Thursday morning on a regular chartered flight to neighboring Pakistan. Diplomats in Kabul confirmed the EU official, the mission's acting head, had been on the same flight.

While neither organization has formerly named the pair, it is common knowledge in the capital that they are Michael Semple and Mervin Patterson, who have lived and worked in Afghanistan for more than a decade—even during the rule of the Taliban that was toppled by the US-led invasion in 2001.

Semple is British and Patterson Irish.

The Afghan government declared the pair persona non grata after accusing them of

meeting Taliban officials last week in troubled southern Helmand province, a bastion for the insurgency and the main drug-producing region of Afghanistan.

EU and UN officials insist the pair were meeting only local elders and the whole affair was a "misunderstanding."

"As part of our efforts in Helmand province we need to be speaking to people on the ground," Siddique said.

"We are dealing with a very

complex situation here in Afghanistan. Tribal communities and tribal relationships are a very complex web."

Afghan officials stood by the expulsions on Thursday.

"We are acting on the basis of our national interest. The two sides (EU and the UN) have agreed that they should go," one official told Reuters.

Aid organizations and analysts say the biggest threat to humanitarian work in the country has been the growing Tal-

iban insurgency, fueled by the region's vast drug trade, and that the only way to stop it is with the cooperation of tribal elders and leaders.

Frequently this involves offering lucrative supply and development opportunities to local leaders in exchange for co-operation on projects. Often the lines are blurred between who is a Taliban member, Taliban sympathizer or those merely hostile to the central government and foreigners. Reuters

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WHAT'S INSIDE

■ Marcelo
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■ Parker
stars as Spurs
send Bulls
reeling /A24



Hapee cagers a win from joyous sweep

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE PHENOMENAL RUN ALMOST CAME TO AN END.

Harbour Centre lost its poise in the clutch yesterday, allowing Hapee Toothpaste to escape with a 72-69 triumph and move within the cusp of a perfect season and a PBL championship.

Harbour Fil-Am Solomon Mercado bungled two crucial free throws with 2.3 seconds left and the Complete Protectors held on to a precarious 70-69 advantage.

Reed Juntila capped a game-high 21 points for the Complete Protectors by converting two free throws off a duty foul to set the final tally.

"Harbour played heads-up basketball," said Hapee coach Jun Noel after his charges stretched their winning streak to 12 in Game 1 of the VGo Extreme Energy Drink Cup best-of-three Finals series at the Rizal Coliseum.

Batang Pier looked poised to snap the Complete Protectors' unbeaten run when Mercado, playing sensational ball throughout the conference, drew a foul from Larry Rodriguez.

But the pressure proved

GAME TOMORROW
(Rizal Coliseum)
3 p.m.—Harbour
Centre vs Hapee
(Game 2-Finals)

too much for the rookie guard. His misses derailed a Batang Pier rally highlighted by a Benedict Fernandez triple that trimmed the margin to a point, 70-69, with 17 seconds remaining.

"Our players' desire to win was there," said Noel. "Whether Mercado shoots the free throws or not, we thought that we could still run a fastbreak. We could still have a play in the last two seconds."

Mark Borboran chipped in 12 points, while Gabe Norwood proved to be the better Fil-Am performer with 11 points, 12 boards, seven assists and two blocks.

Dino Daa also shone in the second half as the Complete Protectors rose from a nine-point deficit, 28-37, at the break.

Earlier, Toyota Balintawak hacked out an 88-77 triumph over San Mig Coffee to secure third place.

Erwin Sta. Maria paced the Road Kings' fourth-quarter surge to finish with 17 points, while Cholo Villanueva added 14.

The Complete Protectors finally grabbed the lead when Daa converted

two free throws off a flagrant foul by Ed-
win Asoro.

Then Borboran and Norwood got into the scoring mix to lift Hapee ahead, 54-
51, by the end of the quarter.

Juntila then towed the Complete Pro-
tectors to a 69-62 advantage heading in-
to the final two minutes, before a TY
Tang jumper sparked the Batang Pier's
late run.

With Hapee still up at 70-66, Fernan-
dez nailed a clutch triple in the dwing-
ling seconds to threaten at 70-69 fol-
lowing Tang and Asoro's missed at-
tempts from beyond the arc.

Batang Pier opened a 37-28 spread at
the half as the Complete Protectors shot
only six points in the second period.

The scores:

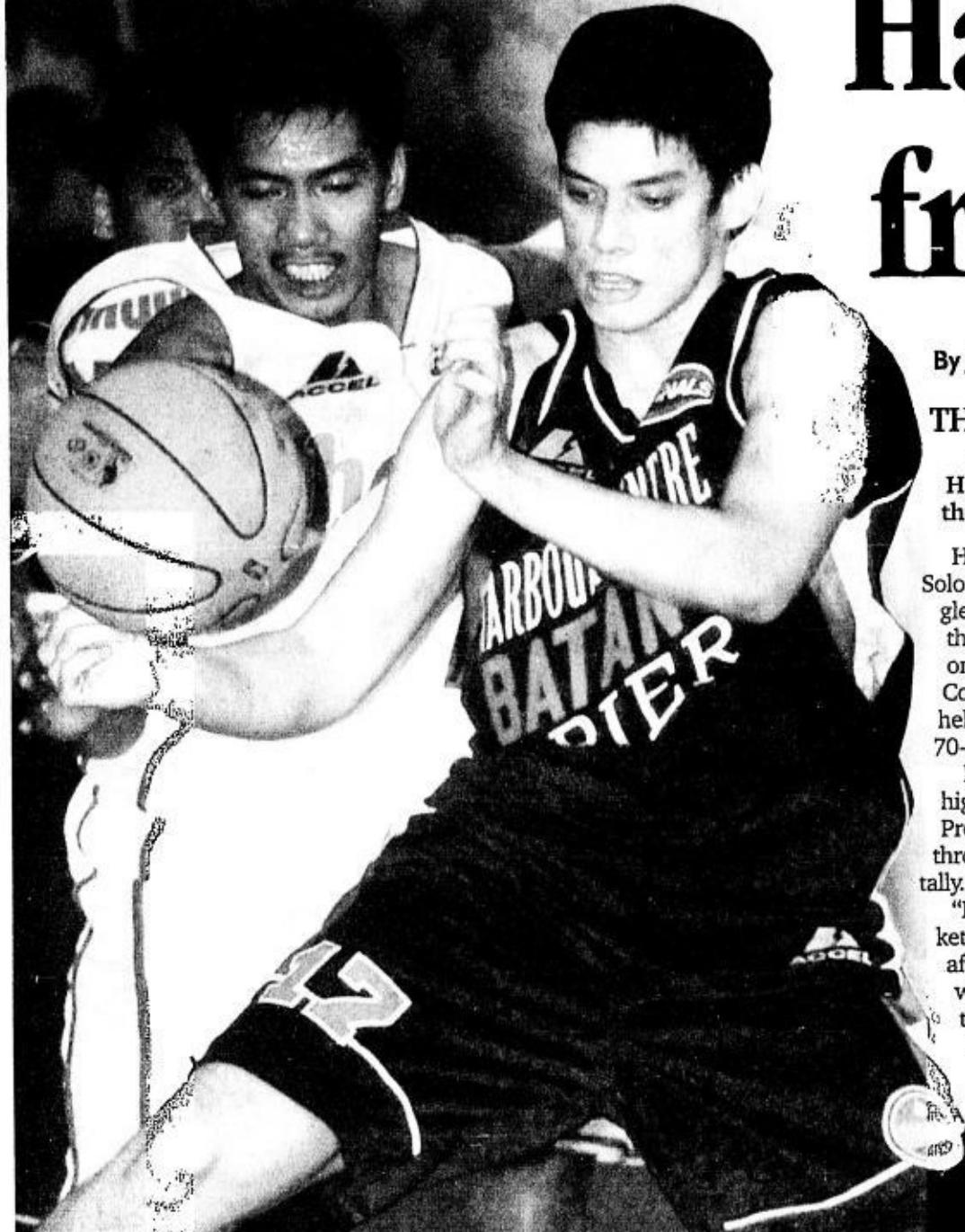
First Game
TOYOTA BALINTAWAK 88—Sta. Maria 17, Villanue-
va 14, Aldave 12, Rodriguez 12, Sena 8, Casio 5, Faun-
do 4, Hayes 4, Cole 2, Balgos 2, Alcaraz 2, Dedicatiora 2,
Jaime 2, Guerrero 2.

SAN MIG COFFEE 77—Dela Perla 19, Rafales 14,
Custodio 12, Escobal 6, Bolcon 6, Ekwa 4, Saldua 4,
Luanzon 3, Del Rosario 3, Pascual 2, Arao 2, Sorongon-
2, Sison 0, Angeles 0.

Quarters: 27-20, 44-41, 65-60, 88-77
Second Game
HAPEE 72—Juntila 21, Borboran 12, Norwood 11,
Mercado 10, Daa 9, Sagudel 3, Quinday 2, Hugnalan
2, Rodriguez 2, Hermida 0, Espiritu 0, Grijaldo 0, Viray
0.

HARBOUR CENTRE 69—Tang 14, Asoro 13, Mer-
cado 10, Ababou 9, Taylor 4, Maierhofer 4, Vergara 4,
Gonzales 4, Fernandez 3, Malaban 2, Cañizares 0.

Quarters: 22-16, 28-37, 51, 72-69



HABEE'S Larry Rodriguez (left) deflects a pass intended for Harbour Centre's Chester Taylor in the third quarter of last night's game at Rizal Coliseum.

INQUIRER PHOTO/RYAN LIM

Strong RP team to Asian chessfest

GRANDMASTER
Wesley So, at 14 the world's youngest grandmaster today, will most likely play board one for the national squad vying in the Asian Chess Team Championship starting Jan. 2 in the southern Indian city of Visakhapatnam.

"I hope to do well in this event," said So, currently No. 3 in the RP-Fide rating list with an Elo of 2531.

So is going to India with three other GMs—Mark Paragua, Eugene Torre and Rogelio Antonio Jr.—and Singapore-based International Master Julio Catalino Sadorra, who already has one GM norm.

National Chess Federation president Prospero "Butch" Pichay said the five-man team is the strongest possible squad that the country can field at this time.

So completed his GM norm at the recent 2nd Prospero Pichay Jr. Cup International Open.

Sheerie Joy Lomibao, Beverly Mendoza, Sherily Cua and Catherine Pereña make up the RP women's team. Marlon Barnardino, Contributor

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Globe™

Pumaren, Lim keen on UAAP-NCAA caging merger

By June Navarro

SAN BEDA'S SAM EKWE HAS BEEN lording it over at the paint without respect for the other team. And nobody could break the rhythm of La Salle's JV Casio when his three-pointers find their target.

La Salle coach Franz Pumaren and San Beda mentor Frankie Lim both think a game featuring Casio's shooting and the dominating inside presence of Ekwe could be a dream encounter in the 2008 UAAP-NCAA Centennial Cup.

P1.8-M Clark Int'l Marathon unfurls Jan. 13

A TOP PRIZE OF \$7,000 (ABOUT P288,000) will be at stake for the grand winners of the 2008 Clark International Marathon set Jan. 13 at the Clark Freeport in Pampanga.

The male and female runner-up will get P150,000 each and the third placers will pocket P75,000 in the 42-kilometer event organized by the Clark Development Corp. in partnership with ActivAsia Inc. and ABS-CBN.

Deadline for registration is Jan. 5.

The total cash prize at stake actually reaches P1.8 million with the winners of the 10K and 5K runs getting P15,000 each and the age group first placers receiving P7,000 each.

In addition, cash prizes will be awarded down to the 10th placer of the main races.

Billed as the "Race to the Future," the marathon will be the first to use a special computer chip that can monitor the progress of the runners with GPS technology.

Under the AMB ChipX Timing system, each athlete is fitted with a transponder, which emits a signal. As the athlete crosses the start-finish line, the signal is detected and the exact time calculated.

The system guarantees 100-percent accuracy regardless of the density of participants arriving at the finish line, assuring the runners of a fair and exact result.

The Clark Freeport is an ideal marathon site. With an international airport and several world-class hotels, Clark is not only accessible but also very traveler-friendly, offering a variety of activities before and after the marathon.

The marathon is sanctioned by the Philippine Amateur Track and Field Association and endorsed by the Philippine Sports Commission.

The race will be televised by the ABS-CBN network in the country and The Filipino Channel worldwide.

Both champion coaches yesterday gave their nod to an ambitious plan that could unite all the schools from the UAAP and the NCAA under one mammoth collegiate league starting next year.

"It's a welcome development for collegiate basketball," said Pumaren, whose Green Archers captured this year's UAAP men's basketball varsity crown. "I think it will benefit both the UAAP and the NCAA."

Lim, who has steered the Red Lions to a second straight NCAA seniors basketball title, shared the optimism and enthusiasm of Pumaren.

"That will be huge," said Lim. "But if you ask me, it would be best if they put up one collegiate league and make it a yearly endeavor."

Envisioned by BAP-Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas executive director Patrick Gregorio, the Centennial Cup is being planned to coincide with next year's UAAP hosting by the University of the Philippines on the school's 100th anniversary.

There's one concern, though, that Pumaren and Lim want addressed. Both

believe the format should benefit all the member schools.

Lim said the Centennial Cup organizers should rate the teams and put them in a division or bracket where they could flourish. Pumaren is batting for a format that would suit the calendar of both leagues.

"There are a lot of ways to skin the cat," said Lim. "They could put up a bracket for strong teams or a Division II for weaker teams."

Pumaren said: "They should sit down and create a format that would appeal to

both institutions. But generally, it (the merger) is a very good idea."

Gregorio will present a concept paper on the proposed UAAP-NCAA merger early next month to UP president Emelinda Roman, UP chancellor Sergio Cao and NCAA host Mapua, through its president Rey Veia.

After getting the nod of the UAAP board and NCAA management committee, Gregorio said an ad hoc committee, whose chief task is to oversee the affairs and interests of the UAAP-NCAA merger, will be formed.



STA. LUCIA big man Marlow Aquino tries to put up a shot off Talk 'N Text's Khalani Ferreria and Jay Washington in a recent game. RYAN LIM

Realtors out to keep No. 2 vs Dragons

THE ORIGINAL PLAN WAS JUST TO MAKE the top five. But with everything finally falling into place, the Sta. Lucia Realtors are suddenly looking at achieving even bigger things.

"Right now, I think top two is doable," coach Boyet Fernandez said last week after the Realtors won their fifth straight game and tied for second place in the Smart PBA Philippine Cup eliminations.

Sta. Lucia, the underachieving team of the last five years, seeks to extend that streak and claim solo second place today when the red-hot Realtors battle the slumping and undermanned Welcoats at the Araneta Coliseum in Cubao.

Game time is 4:35 p.m.

"Before the season, our goal was to make the top five (and be in the playoffs outright)," Fernandez said after a 92-91 win over Talk 'N Text last Dec. 23. "But now that we are in this position, we will definitely try to go (for a) top two (slot)."

Welcoats could be easy picking for the Realtors, as the Dragons have lost their last eight games—the tournament's longest losing spell.

They are in danger of getting eliminated for the third straight time in the league unless something drastic happens—like winning their last three games and Coca-Cola and

Air21 failing to win any of their last three.

But in fairness to Welcoats, this team has been walking wounded for almost two months now, with cornerstone Jay-R Reyes out because of a bruised knee and chief backup, point guard Froilan Baguion, also unable to play because of an eye injury.

There were unconfirmed reports that Reyes, who finished second to Sta. Lucia's Kelly Williams in the top rookie race last year, would be reactivated for this game.

The Express, meanwhile, try to make the wild-card phase, at least, when they tangle with Magnolia in the 7:20 p.m. contest.

Gary David, who led the Express in scoring last year before an ACL tear put him out of commission, could make his much-awaited return tonight.

A win by the Express would give them a 7-9 card and out of reach of the Dragons.

Musong R. Castillo

Juvic slowly steps out of Frankie's shadow

By Cedel Tupas, Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—JUVIC PAGUNSAN IS OPTIMISTIC he will be able surpass the form that saw him leap out of nowhere to place 17th in the Order of Merit at the end of the Asian Tour season this month.

After coming through with big finishes in two of the last five tournaments of the year, the 29-year-old said he plans to work on his physical conditioning early in January, before the season opener, the Asian Tour Invitational, from Jan. 24-27.

"I played 12 straight tournaments on the tour and I need to rest," said Pagunsan, who is in Bacolod for a short vacation. "But I'll train early for next season."

Pagunsan enjoyed an spectacular first season that netted him the Rookie of the Year honors and was looking forward to another big season at the start of 2007.

But a collarbone injury hampered his progress,

forcing him out of action for almost three months.

The former caddie at the Bacolod Golf and Country Club in Binitin, Murcia, though, turned adversity into an opportunity to sharpen his game.

Pagunsan said he spent long hours lifting weights and did road runs.

It didn't take long for the two-time Southeast Asian Games individual gold medalist's efforts to be rewarded as he produced a breakthrough win in the Pertamina Indonesia President Invitational. The victory was worth \$55,475.

Pagunsan led by four strokes heading into the final round of the season-ending Volvo Masters in Thailand only to flounder on the last hole, yielding the title to Thai hero Prayad Marksang by a shot.

But the \$69,000 runner-up purse raised Pagunsan's earnings to \$187,452, the best among Filipinos on the tour.

His strong Asian Tour finish boosted him past Fil-

JUVIC Pagunsan lets out a yell as he sinks the winning putt in the Indonesia tournament.

ipino No. 1 Frankie Miñoz, who ended up 19th with \$183,405.

But he still remains several notches off the stature of Miñoz, this year's Philippine Open champion who also owns a victory in the much tougher and richer Japanese circuit this season.

Pagunsan said he hopes his recurring shoulder injury will heal completely so he can focus on his game in time for the beginning of the season.



John Hay Chairman's Cup golf gets going today

BAGUIO CITY—WITH NEWLY RENOVATED GREENS and new tee boxes, Camp John Hay Golf Club is all set to formally treat its members when the Chairman's Cup tees off today.

More than 230 members, including chair Robert Sobrepéña and guests, are vying in the two-day tourney.

Aside from the usual trophies and raffle prizes, a Mazda 3 sedan will be given away as part of the club's

quarterly car raffle bonanza.

A Subair System, a device which literally drains a drenched green in 30 seconds, has been installed at Camp John Hay's 100-yard, par-three sixth hole, which is usually flooded during the rainy season.

In addition, tee mounds were upgraded to suit international standards.

"Our members can now truly enjoy No. 6 of the

beautiful par-69 layout redesigned by Jack Nicklaus," said Sobrepéña. "The course itself is slowly getting back in superb shape with faster and firmer greens."

Sobrepéña said the club made the innovations in preparation for a busy 2008 season, including the annual Fil-Am and Corporate Cup.

The Asian Ladies Invitational will make a comeback in May.

Race	1—(Tri)	Stop Talking (4), Lady Cut-gut (3), Sweet Karah (1)
Race 2—(Qrt/Tri)	Yes Sir I'm Yours (2), Madam Composition (7), Cool N' Sassy (6), Memory of Fire (3)	
Race 3—(Qrt/Tri)	Pernicious (3), On the Fairway/Tata Rit (2), Elegancia (7), Unfolding (1)	
Race 4—(Qrt/Tri)	Lord Brian (1), Triple Threat (5), Erica's Talent (6), Speed Admiral (7)	
Race 5—(Qrt/Tri)	El Terrible (6), Ger Francis (1), Hok Kee Hok (4), Manila Magic (7)	
Race 6—(Fablo)	Fablob (9), Sir Guguy (6), Speed Bullet (8), Interceptor (2), Goldsphere (3)	
Race 7—(Qrt/Tri)	Venus D'Goddess (7), Good Humour/Field Star (1), Tower of Strength (7), Ocean Cookie (3)	
Race 8—(Qrt/Tri)	Dondon's Entry (3), Rebound (4), Terry Toon (6), Best In Field (7)	
Race 9—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)	Landed Visa (6), From This Moment (7), Stallone/Burst of Speed (11), Devil Rising (10), Tiger Ratty (1), Freedom Charger (3)	

RACING

BY TOP CHOICE



FILIPINO ace Stefano Marcelo shows his trophy as overall winner of the 2007 Asian karting series in Macau. He is flanked by runner-up Guykoh Boonhan (left) of Thailand and third placer Luca Ferriguti of Hong Kong.

Marcelo tops Asian kart series

MACAU—STEFANO MARCELO CLINCHED THE ASIAN KARTING overall crown with an impressive podium finish in the recent Macau Kart Prix at the Kartodromo de Coloane.

The 14-year-old lead driver of San Miguel Corp.-Marcelo Racing finished second to Japan's Naotaka Hori in the pre-final race of the 2007 Asian Karting Open Championship to sew up the title.

Marcelo topped the series with 110 points, beating Guykoh Boonhan of Thailand and third placer Luca Ferriguti of Hong Kong.

Apart from winning the Shell Helix Karter of the Year plum and the Cebu ROK Series title, Marcelo finished in the top 10 of the 2007 ROK World Cup in Italy recently.

As Asian champion, Marcelo merited an invitation to race his red Maranello kart in the featured KF1 category of the prix, where he competed against the world's finest factory drivers, including world champions Marco Ardigo, Gary Catt and Will Stevens.

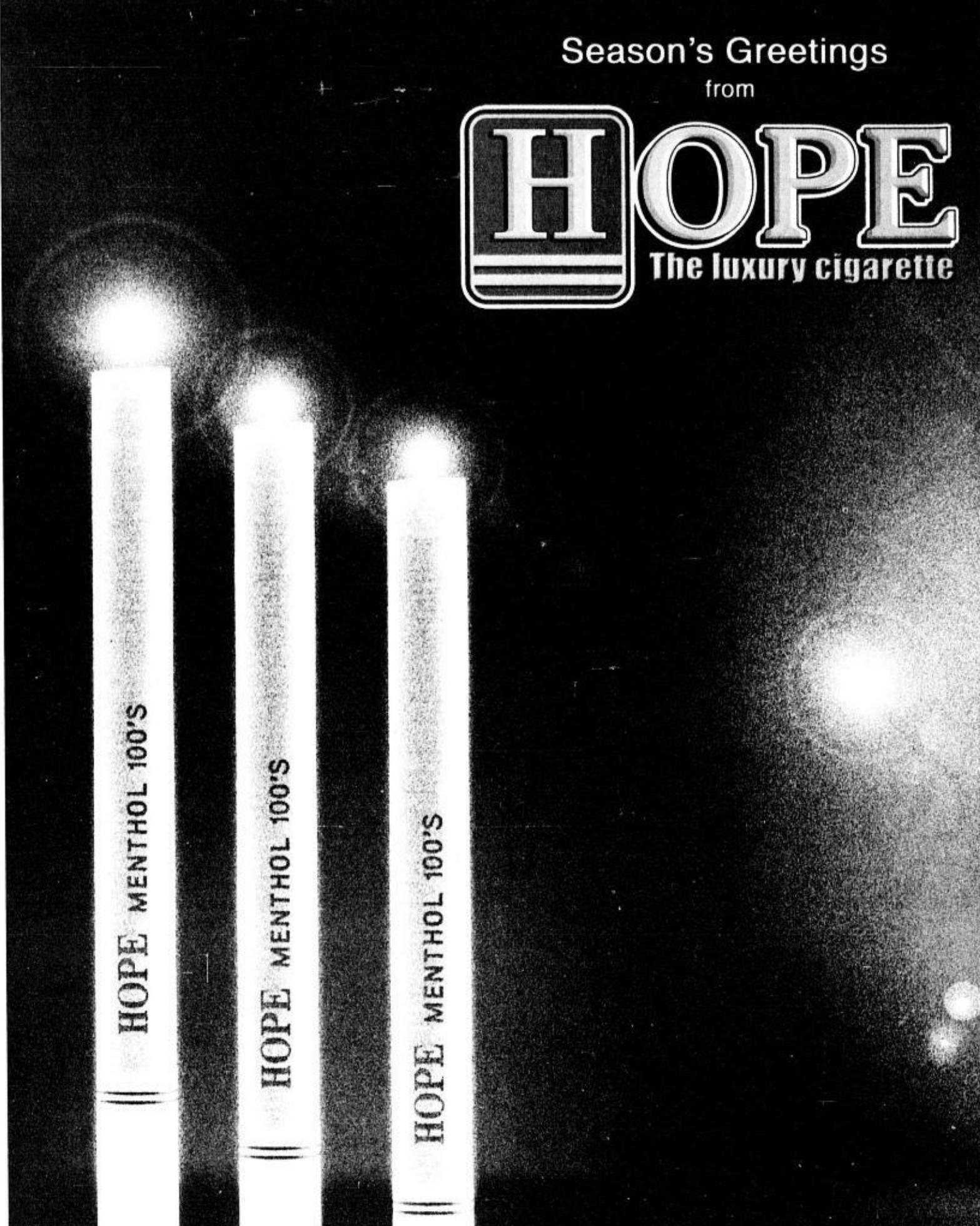
Marcelo qualified to the KF1 pre-final race ahead of Stevens and just a whisker behind Ardigo despite using an old engine.

Holding his own against Tony Kart-equipped European drivers, Marcelo overtook Ardigo, Catt and Stevens halfway through the pre-finals and eventually wound up fifth in the 28-man KF1 grid.

In the gruelling 25-lap final race, Marcelo held fourth spot behind the Tony Kart karters until exhaustion took its toll. He settled for 10th place, matching his result in the World Cup.

"It's quite an experience racing with the world champions," he said. "It was a fruitful stint considering we got the Asian title."

"We did not anticipate that it would be extremely physically demanding for a youngster to run in competitive races back-to-back," said Stefano's dad John, the former jetski champ. "But Stefano proved he was up to the challenge."

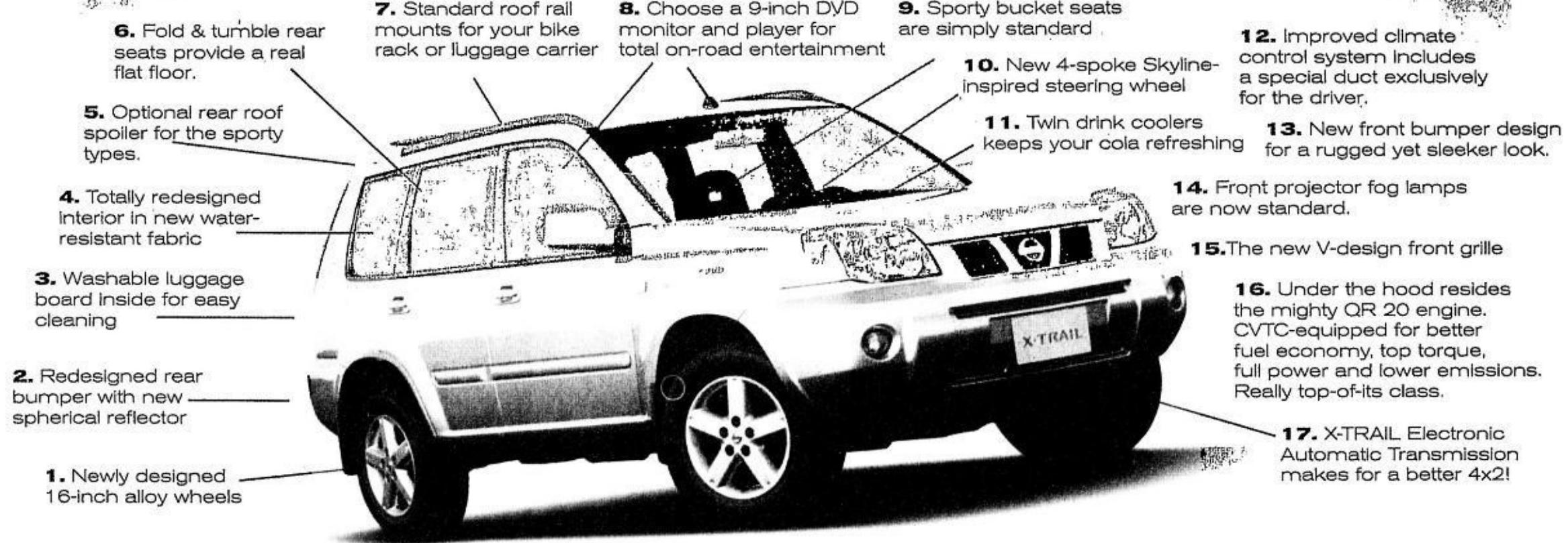


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\$3.3-B MRT-7 project approved

IN THIS ISSUE

- Mobile phone mart still growing /B3
- Gov't cuts BOC collection goal /B6

Agriculture makes a comeback in '07

By Amy R. Remo

(First of two parts)

PHILIPPINE AGRICULTURE POSTED A MAJOR COMEBACK IN 2007, growing faster than expected despite the ill-effects of typhoons, climate change, animal diseases, global supply shortfalls and market distortions.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap said that despite the dry spell that lingered until late into the year, the local **YEARENDER** farm sector expanded by 5.7 percent in the third quarter, buoying government hopes of a much higher full-year economic growth.

In the first nine months, agriculture grew by 4.3 percent, with the fisheries subsector expanding by 7.92 percent to a production volume of 3.3 million metric tons.

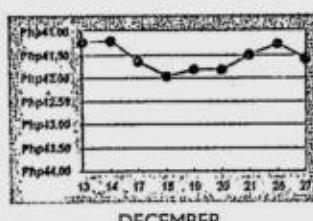
Yap expressed confidence that the farm sector would hit the Department of Agriculture's original target of 4.5-5 percent for this year.

"International institutions like the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are now bullish on the Philippines as joining the club of the region's fastest-growing economies this year and in 2008," Yap said.

Five-point agenda

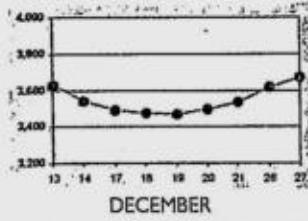
The DA said the impressive growth for AGRICULTURE/B5

INDICATORS CURRENCIES



STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



Shares close 1.5% higher

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 1.5-PERCENT higher yesterday as fund managers spruced up portfolios for the yearend, dealers said.

They said investors, however, were also cautious ahead of a four-day holiday break. Financial markets will be closed Monday and Tuesday next week for New Year celebrations. Trading resumes on Wednesday.

The composite index finished up 55.01 points at 3,667.64, its best close since Dec. 11 when it settled at 3,672.38. The broader all-share index gained 25.14 points or 1.1 percent to 2,243.12.

Gainers beat decliners 65 to 40, while 58 stocks ended flat. A total of 1.6 billion shares worth P3.1 billion changed hands.

Trading was light, but gains in select blue chips led by Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) and conglomerate Ayala Corp., and in select mining stocks sent the benchmark to its best finish in more than two weeks.

"It was the continued window dressing that led today's rally. The selling pressure seems to have tapered off as most of the selling orders were finished last week," said Rommel Macapagal of Westlink Global Equities.

AFP

- Mobile phone mart still growing /B3
- Gov't cuts BOC collection goal /B6

Bigest infrastructure deal gets Neda green light

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE GOVERNMENT YES-TERDAY gave the green light to the long-delayed Metro Rail Transit Phase 7 (MRT-7).

build-operate-transfer project, making it the single biggest infrastructure undertaking of the Arroyo administration.

The approval was given by the board of the National Economic and Development Authority after the pro-

ject proponent agreed to put up more than \$300 million as a performance bond—a constant sore point between the private sector consortium and the Department of Finance.

"The project was finally approved and we want this to start as soon as

possible," Economic Planning Secretary and Neda Director General Augusto Santos said in a telephone interview.

The entire undertaking will cost at least \$3.3 billion—a price tag that includes the rail and road components.

\$3.3-B MRT-7/B6

Eastwood City presents

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Regine Velasquez

Let the good times roll with Asia's Songbird.

Dec. 29, Saturday, 8 PM, Central Plaza

Side A
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Dec. 28, Friday, 8 PM, Central Plaza

Countdown to 2008

Treat yourself to melodies from a variety of musical eras.



The following shows start on time on Dec. 31, Monday, at the Central Plaza:

6 PM Groove to '70s rock and roll music with **The Members**.

7:15 PM The Bloomfields brings to life the music from the golden '60s.

8:30 PM Richard Poon sings classics from the '50s.

10 PM Rock-alternative artist **LALA** debuts as Eastwood City's newest resident performer.

11:30 PM The Rage Band takes the stage with '80s new wave music.

12 MN Count down to the New Year with an exciting **Fireworks Display and Laser Lights Show**.

12:30 AM onwards Dance to Brazilian samba and house music in a street party featuring **Brigada** and **DJ Vhong**.



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Laughs, for a change

IN THREE DAYS TIME, 2007 WILL be history and we'll have a brand new year.

Except for those who have to report for work, many of us will be spending the remaining days catching up on our readings, watching the latest (pirated?) DVDs or bumming around the mall.

In keeping with the atmosphere, I've decided to make today's column light by sharing with you some bloopers and quotable quotes that I picked up from the Internet.

The mundane aspects of corporate and securities laws can wait for the coming weeks.

I cannot vouch for the accuracy of the attributions. Please take them in the spirit of clean fun, and nothing else.

Question: If you could live forever, would you and why?

Answer: I would not live forever, because we should not live forever, because if we were supposed to live forever, then we would live forever, but we cannot live forever, which is why I would not live forever.

—Miss Alabama in a Miss USA contest

Host: What is your edge over the other contestants?

Contestant: My edge ... 23 years old.

"Whenever I watch TV and see those poor starving kids all over the world, I can't help but cry. I mean I'd love to be skinny like that, but not with all those flies and death and stuff."

—Mariah Carey

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you've lost a very important part of your life."

—Brooke Shields, during an interview to become the spokesperson for the antismoking campaign

Host: If you had a foreigner friend, where will you bring him to showcase the beauty of the Philippines?

Contestant: Bocage.

Host: Why Bocage, what makes it special?

Contestant: Because it's a beautiful place.

Host: Which part of Bocage?

Contestant: The Bocage Rice Terraces.

"Traditionally, most of Australia's imports come from overseas."

—Keppel Underhill, a businessman

Host: What, in your opinion, is the ideal age for marriage?

Contestant: Between 24 and 25!

"If we don't succeed, we run the risk of failure."

—Bill Clinton, husband of US Sen. Hillary Clinton

"I love California. I practically grew up in Phoenix, Arizona."

—Dan Quayle, former US vice president

"We don't necessarily discriminate. We simply exclude certain types of people."

—Col. Gerald Woodrow, ROTC instructor

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

(For feedback, please write to rpalabrica@inquirer.com.ph.)

Host: How do you see yourself 10 years from now?

Contestant: I'll be 28 years old.

"It isn't pollution that's harming the environment. It's the impurities in our air and water that are doing it.

"We are ready for an unforeseen event that may or may not occur."

—Al Gore, former US vice president

Host: I heard you almost didn't make it to the contest? Did you ride or did you walk?

Contestant: Of course, did you ride. What do you think of me, did you walk?

"Your food stamps will be stopped effective immediately because we received notice that you passed away. May God bless you. You may reapply if there is a change in your circumstances."

—Department of Social Services, New York

Host: What is the biggest problem facing the youth today?

Student: Drugs.

Host: Why?

Student: Mahal, eh!

"Smoking kills. If you're killed,

you're not going to be able to tell anyone."

—Mariah Carey

Host: What is your edge over the other contestants?

Contestant: My edge ... 23 years old.

"When ever I watch TV and see those poor starving kids all over the world, I can't help but cry. I mean I'd love to be skinny like that, but not with all those flies and death and stuff."

—Mariah Carey

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

PROPERTY FIRM VISTA LAND AND Lifescapes Inc. is upbeat on the property market in 2008 due to a better economy and strong demand from overseas Filipino workers for housing projects.

In a statement, Vista Land president Benjamarie Serrano said low inflation, steady interest rates, a firmer peso, increasing tourists and more foreign investments have kept the economic environment stable. She also said that OFWs would remain the biggest market for the

the 195-unit condominium project dubbed KL Mosaic in Legaspi Village, Makati City; a 3.1-hectare mixed-use development in Quezon City; two leisure homes development in Boracay and Cebu; an expansion of its Cerritos housing project covering 6 hectares in Cavite under its Camella Homes brand; a second building of its low-rise residential condominium in Taguig City (809 units) called Pacific Residences II; its first high-rise condominium in Makati under the Crown Asia brand in Salcedo Village; and Ponticelli II, an expansion of its fastest selling residential enclave in Cavite.

Among these projects identified are

the 195-unit condominium project

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Vista Land upbeat on 2008 prospects

property sector.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas recently said it expected total remittances from OFWs to exceed \$14 billion this year.

About 60 percent of Vista Land's sales come from Filipinos working or residing abroad.

Vista Land, the country's biggest homebuilder led by the family of Senate President Manuel Villar, has lined up new projects starting in 2008 for its high-end luxury homes brand Brittany and middle market housing brand Crown Asia, Serrano earlier said.

Among these projects identified are

Get your remittances faster with Metrobank

METROPOLITAN Bank & Trust Company (Metrobank), the country's largest bank in terms of consolidated assets, announces the fastest ways for remitters to send money and for beneficiaries to receive their remittances this Yuletide season.

To receive remittances within minutes, Metrobank clients are advised to send their money via Metrobank's network of international offices. There are Metrobank branches and subsidiaries located in major cities across the world that offer a wide range of banking services, including remittance services. Clients may also transact with Metrobank's over 1,000 remittance partners and correspondent banks, for added convenience. For fast, reliable, and safe remittance service, use the Metrobank Global Remittance Network.

Clients may also use metrobankdirect, Metrobank's Internet banking facility. The metrobankdirect enables accountholders to do banking transactions online, real-time, and features account inquiry, bills payment, funds transfer, telegraphic transfers, loan applications, and more. Enrollment in metrobankdirect is free of charge.

Metrobank also announced that it has opened selected branches during weekends to make banking services available to clients especially during the holiday season. The following selected branches nationwide will be open to clients for the remainder of the holidays:

December 29, 2007, Saturday: (MEGA MANILA) Bacoor-Cavite, Biñan-Laguna, Trece Martires-Cavite, Gen. Trias-Cavite, Sta. Monica-Navalches, Sto. Cristo-CM Recto, Comercio, New Divisoria-Market, Tutuban Primeblock, Roosevelt, EDSA-Caloocan, Farmer's Plaza, Ortigas-Robinson's Galleria, Sta. Ana-Manila, Seafront, Bonifacio-Global City, Greenbelt, Pasong Tamo-Metropolitan Avenue, Alabang,

Muntinlupa, Redemptorist-Baclaran, Baclaran, Pasay-Libertad, A. Arnaiz-San Lorenzo Village, San Lorenzo Village-Makati, Rockwell Center, Urdaneta Village-Makati, EDSA-Dasmariñas Village, Kalayaan Bel Air-Makati, B.F. Homes, Sucat-Ireneville, Doña Soledad Avenue-Bicutan, and East Service Road-Bicutan.

(LÜZON) Batangas Main, Bauan-Batangas, Kumintang-Ilaya, Lemery-Batangas, Rosario-Batangas, Tanuan-Batangas, Baguio-Bonifacio, Candon, San Carlos, Pangasinan; Camiling, Tarlac; Tarlac-F. Tañedo, Dau, Balanga, Bataan; San Miguel, Bulacan; Ilagan, Solano, Cabanatuan-Main, and (VISAYAS) Iloilo-Jaro, Iloilo-Lapaz, Masbate, Dumaguete Main, Silay, Cebu-Taboan.

December 30, 2007, Sunday: (MEGA MANILA) Tanza-Cavite (LUZON) Balayan-Batangas, Lipa-B. Morada, Sorsogon, Laoag-Rizal, Alaminos, Pangasinan; San Jose, Nueva Ecija, and (VISAYAS) Boracay.

December 31, 2007, Monday: (MEGA MANILA) Sto. Cristo-San Nicolas, (LUZON) Tagaytay, Calapan, Lipa-Ayala, Legaspi-Rizal, Naga-Gen. Luna, Lucena-Red V, Occidental-Mindoro, Dagupan-Main; (VISAYAS) Iloilo-Diversion Road, Antique, Roxas, Roxas-Arnaldo, Bacolod-Capitol, Bacolod-Gatuslao, Bacolod-Lacson, Dumaguete-Real, Ormoc, Tacloban Main; (MINDANAO) Zamboanga-Veterans, Dipolog-Gen. Luna, Pagadian-Rizal, Pagadian-Sta. Lucia

January 05, 2008, Saturday: EDSA-Muñoz Market and San Carlos, Pangasinan

In making the Bank's extensive branch network available to clients beyond the usual banking days, Metrobank provides superior convenience and reliable service at a time when clients need them most. For more information, please visit the Metrobank branch nearest you, or call (02) 898-8000. You may also visit www.metrobank.com.ph.

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Malibay, Bonifacio-Global City, Greenbelt,

BUSINESS Friday

MIDDLE-CLASS CONSUMER REVOLUTION

Modern women a leading force in China



VISITORS walk under Christmas decorations at a shopping mall in Hong Kong. AP

A NEW SURVEY OF CHINA'S BURGEONING middle class forecasts this influential sector will reach 100 million by 2016 from 35 million today. The groundbreaking survey is the result of a knowledge leadership partnership between HSBC and MasterCard Worldwide, while Fudan University in Shanghai was commissioned to design and implement the survey in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou.

Peter Wong, HSBC's executive director Hong Kong and Mainland China, said, "This survey is important because the growing middle class consumer segment in China will be one of the biggest in the world and will have a huge impact on many industries and services. As Mainlanders shift from a purely savings mentality to one of spending and investment, the opportunities will be plenty for many players including financial service providers."

The survey found, compared to a middle class average, modern women displayed a higher appetite for luxury goods, for buying property and they expect to make their investments work harder, with a higher expectation of investment returns.

The survey focused on the country's middle class and its two sub-segments: modern women and 'DINKs' (Double Income couples with No Kids). A total of 1,736 in-depth, face-to-face interviews were conducted from February to May 2007 in the three Mainland cities to identify the middle-class lifestyle, symbols of wealth and aspirations.

How middle class emerged

Dr. Yuwa Hedrick-Wong, economic advisor of MasterCard Worldwide in Asia-Pacific, who worked with HSBC to conceptualize the study, explained the emergence of the middle class in China, the majority of whom is found in the metropolitan areas. He said, "Robust economic growth over the past three decades has created a sizeable middle class in China today. The dramatic transformation of China's job market, driven increasingly by a private sector that offers more professional employment and higher income for those with the right educational qualifications, has lifted millions of households out of poverty and elevated them to middle class. In the coming decade,

the role of a confident and expanding middle class will be even more crucial for China as they will raise domestic consumption demand, thus reducing China's current over-dependence on external demand."

Profile of middle class

In this survey, middle class is defined as those aged between 20 and 49 with annual personal incomes in the range of \$7,500 to \$25,000. About half (48 percent) reside in metropolitan areas with 17 percent in Beijing, 16 percent in Shanghai and 15 percent in Guangzhou.

Modern women and DINKs are two significant subsets of middle class. Modern women, currently estimated at 17.4 million in 2006 and likely to swell to 31.5 million in 2016, are urban-based and aged 30-44. In this survey, they must have completed college education and are professionally employed. DINKs (men aged from 22 to 45 and women from 20 to 40) are those who plan not to have children in the next three years. Predominantly located in Beijing and Shanghai, the population size of DINK households stood at approximately 600,000 in 2006 and is estimated to grow to 750,000 in 2016.

Modern women display the strongest appetite for luxury goods with 85 percent having purchased such items, followed by the middle class at 76 percent and DINKs at 75 percent. Forty-four

percent of modern women bought luxury goods for quality (vs 40 percent middle class and 38 percent DINKs) and they are the least price-sensitive (at price-conscious level of 3.5 vs middle class' 3.8 and DINKs' 3.9). Almost a quarter of all the three groups said they bought luxury goods to reward themselves (middle class 21 percent, modern women 22 percent and DINKs 23 percent). DINKs show the highest preference to buy for status (11 percent vs middle class' 10 percent and modern women's 8 percent).

Importance of property ownership

The survey showed modern women as having the highest incidence of owning their homes (86 percent vs 77 percent for middle class and 73 percent for DINKs). Of those who do not own property, only 18 percent (vs 30 percent of middle class and 26 percent of DINKs) could not afford and only 15 percent (vs 25 percent of middle class and 20 percent of DINKs) are living with parents. On property purchase plans, 53 percent of modern women plan to buy in the next 2 to 3 years while 57 percent of the middle class and 50 percent of DINKs want to do so.

At least half of the middle class are traveling for business and leisure. Modern women top the list of frequent travelers. Only 39 percent of them have not done any international busi-

ness travel (vs 46 percent for middle class and 52 percent for DINKs) and 34 percent have not gone on a personal overseas trip (vs 47 percent for middle class and 51 percent DINKs). One in five modern women have traveled overseas three times or more on business in a year (vs 13 percent for middle class and 14 percent for DINKs).

Dining out has also become a hallmark of the urban middle-class lifestyle in China.

On average, they go out for dinner three times a week, half of the time for business purposes. There are no stark differences across the segments.

Modern women are the leading force in mainland China middle-class consumer revolution

Personal investment and insurance

The survey shows that traditional Chinese mentality still prevails as property and bank savings remain the most popular investments. Fifty-two percent of modern women hold property for investments vs 42 percent for both the middle class and the DINKs.

Thirty-six percent across the segments invest in term deposits.

Domestic stocks are, not surprisingly, popular for wealth growth. Thirty-eight percent of modern women invest in domestic stocks compared to 34 percent among middle class and 33 percent among DINKs. On insurance, the majori-

ty of the middle class own some form of insurance (life and non-life). For example, 67 percent of modern women have life insurance, higher than middle class' 62 percent and DINKs' 56 percent, while 58 percent of modern women have critical illness insurance (vs 52 percent for middle class and 49 percent for DINKs).

The overall usage of professional financial advisors is low among the three segments. Only 10 percent of modern women and 7 percent of both the middle class and the DINKs use this service.

Middle class aspirations

Modern women's strongest aspiration is to earn higher returns on investments (at 26 percent vs 25 percent for middle class and 22 percent for DINKs), followed by self-cultivation and improvement at 20 percent (vs 12 percent for middle class and 12 percent for DINKs). Half of DINKs aim to get career promotions (vs 41 percent middle class and 38 percent modern women). Thirty-six percent of DINKs and middle class hope to start their own business while only 22 percent of modern women intend to do so.

Peter Wong noted, "The middle class in China are evolving to become internationally oriented and mobile, lifestyle-conscious and ambitious in their careers and businesses. As they grow in affluence, they will propel consumption in China."

FEATURES IN BRIEF

Website for women entrepreneurs

GE MONEY BANK and Let's Go Foundation launched the Women Entrepreneurship (WE) website, www.womenentrepreneurship.org, a site dedicated to women who plan to start or are already managing their own businesses.

Apart from information on the women entrepreneurship program, the WE website features revealing studies done on women entrepreneurs, as well as success stories and tips on how to manage a business.

Interesting tidbits found in the website include the finding that 59 percent of women entrepreneurs with "growing" enterprises started their business with a partner or partners, and that there is a gap in female students' desire to put up a business and the knowledge and skills needed to effectively start one.

The WE website features experts who can answer women's questions on business.

Educating educators on wellness

AROUND 900 educators and education stakeholders learned about health, safety and wellness during the 2nd MMLDC Educators' Forum with the theme "Kalusugan, Kaligtasan at Kagalinan ng Ating Paaralan."

The forum, held at Meralco Theater, provided a venue for discussing the current state of health and safety of educators, as well as a setting for sharing best practices in maintaining work-life balance.

"The forum (held at the Meralco Theater) was designed to promote the belief that total wellness enhances learning, thus the promise of school improvement in the context of MMLDC's School-Based Management Development Program (SBMDP)," said Vivien Arnobit, MMLDC's director for academic services. "Understanding the current state of wellness of the country's educators will ground the need for better welfare support for them. It will encourage educators to enhance their leadership practices by modeling a well-balanced and healthy lifestyle. Ultimately, it will produce better educators, thus bringing forth better education for Filipinos."

Participants came from various offices of the Department of Education, MMLDC consul-

tants and resource persons also graced the forum.

DepEd Secretary Jesli A. Lapus, in his keynote address, shared an updated status of health and wellness of Filipino educators.

Healthy lifestyle advocate Cory Quirino spoke about wellness as a personal choice, rather than being affected by the stressors of society. "It is not the situation that creates stress, but how one reacts to that situation," she said. "People can choose to be negatively affected by a given situation, or they can choose not to. This mindset puts wellness right into their hands."

From personal wellness, there was a shift to a focus on managing risk in the school environment as Dr. Dulce Estrella-Gust took the podium. Her topic, "The Practice and Teaching of Health and Safety in Schools," highlighted the need to be aware of certain health and safety risks in the environment since it largely affects all of our wellness.

For inquiries on MMLDC's academic services and programs, call 632-8111 or e-mail: mmldc.academic.services@meralco.com.ph; or visit website at www.mmldc.org.

Vidres.net wins Quill Award

VIDRES.NET, the Philippine spearheaded online job matching facility that pioneered video resumes in Asia, was accorded an award of excellence in the recently held Philippine Quill Awards by the International Association of Business Communications (IABC).

Vidres.net was recognized under communication management, for its strategic communication efforts that demonstrated a full range of planning and management skills, including research, analysis, strategy, tactical implementation and evaluation.

Vidres.net offers a venue online to help job-seekers build their careers and assist employers in finding the right people to fit their requirements. In addition to a text-based resume, job-seekers may upload a video resume, which gives a face, a voice and personality to the application.

It was borne from the partnership between a team of specialists in IT and a group of experts in education, who recognized the need for a quicker and more efficient method of matching employers and employees.

MATI, DAVAO ORIENTAL—HERMINO Malumay, 47, gathers all the coconut husks in one large pile at their coconut farm not far from the town of San Miguel, Davao Oriental. Big piles of coconut husks are usually left to rot or burnt as fuel in most Philippine coconut plantations, but not for Malumay this time.

"I never thought I could still earn some money from all these wastes," Malumay said smiling, wiping beads of sweat from his sun-burnt face with his arm.

Traders come with hauler trucks weekly to buy all the coconut husks from hundreds of farmers like Malumay all over Mindanao island to supply the raw materials of five coco fiber processing plants in the province. Malumay, whose main occupation is producing copra from his 10-hectare coconut farm, has added his income from selling the husks, as well as the coconut shells which he also sells to active carbon plants in Davao.

But it looks like coconut husks are beginning to show its biggest potential as a vital raw material to a new, emerging multimillion dollar industry—the new Philippine coco coir industry.

Coco coir is a durable fiber extracted from dried coconut husks by a decorticating machine that separates the fiber from the coco dust also known as "coco peat." The coco fiber or coir is widely used in making mattresses, cushion for car seats and expensive home furniture. They are also made into fiber sheets and mats used by ecologists as protective covers for soil and slopes to prevent erosion. The peat or coco dust, on the other hand, is packed into brick-shaped blocks and mixed with agri-wastes to produce natural, organic fertilizer.

China today is the world's biggest market for coco coir. The market demand for this coconut fiber is so huge and overwhelming, all the coco coir factories in the Philippines put together could hardly make a dent in the market.

"That's why it's so important for us to help our coco coir manufacturers come up with a cluster scheme to produce in bigger volumes and consolidate their supply to meet this big market demand for their product," says trade assistant secretary Merly M. Cruz.

Market demand for coco fiber mattresses in China is 100 million units yearly which is equivalent to 37,500 metric tons of coco coir every month or 450,000 MT annually.

The Philippine total export capacity is only about 3,000 MT of coco coir a month from all the existing plants in the country combined, according to the Department of Trade and Industry.

The world's biggest suppliers of coco fibers today are India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Vietnam, Cambodia, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh which have been producing the coir from coconut for many years.

Nevertheless, inquiries from several buyers in China, India and Greece are still streaming into the offices of Davao traders and exporters, all looking for reliable suppliers and exporters of coco coir in the Philippines. In one local export firm, Goldelynn, a spokesperson said buyers from the China provinces of Qingdao, Shenyang and Guangzhou are looking to buy 50, 60, 70 containers monthly from any reliable suppliers worldwide. An importer from Greece, according to the company spokesperson, (goldelynn@yahoo.com) wants to buy 60 containers of

40" FCL (full container load) every month. An export order for 70 containers is worth about \$1 million.

A huge demand for coco coir and geo-textiles is growing in China today as it prepares a nationwide beautification campaign for the hosting of the 2008 Olympics. China is losing about 2,400 square kilometers of land to fast-widening deserts and needs coco fibers to help solve their problem of covering 260,000 sq. km. of barren land.

Coco coir is priced around \$150 per metric ton, but this could still go up to \$600 per metric ton if the coir is converted into geotextiles. Last year the Philippines exported only about 10,000 MT of coco coir to China. One of the biggest export deals was made a few years ago by a Filipino firm Cocotechnologies Inc. when it shipped 70 containers of coco coir, geotextiles, mats, biologs and coco peat—all worth one million US dollars.

"Our long-term goal is to supply our export markets with the right volumes on a consistent basis to help sustain this new emerging industry—it's now a gold mine for our coconut farmers," Cruz said.

A typical coco coir plant today could produce only about 40 to 50 MT of coco coir every month, providing jobs to about 200 families. The government target is to generate jobs for at least 5,000 families, once production capacities of each coco coir plant reach the maximum.

Coconut trees cover about 25 percent or a quarter of the entire country's total land area. Some 30 million Filipinos today are dependent on the coconut industry.

Aurelio A. Pena, Philpress features

Coco coir : A new gold mine from coconut husks

Sumilao formula: 3 S's and 5 P's

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

ALYANSA AGRIKULTURA, THE LARGEST farmer-fisherfolk coalition with 42 federations and organizations, is concerned about Sumilao because it may set the tone for future actions affecting small farmers and fisherfolk.

Some suggestions regarding Sumilao appear to make little sense and may even worsen the situation.

Thus, the following win-win formula is proposed:

COMMENTARY

This stands for Sensible Sumilao Solution = Purpose, Process, Product, Peace, Prosperity.

Purpose

Some contend that agrarian reform is synonymous to "land to the tiller." We take the broader view: The real purpose of agrarian reform is to improve the agrarian beneficiary's life.

Research shows, however, that when land is given to the tiller, the farmer is better off only if he gets the appropriate support services.

Unfortunately, when I was Department of Agriculture (DA) undersecretary, I personally witnessed so many situations when the DA could not provide the services because of a severely limited budget.

In those instances when the agrarian beneficiaries lost the former landowner's support services, which the government could not replace, the farmers could hardly survive. They were forced to sell their land and became worse off, thus defeating the real purpose of land reform.

In other cases, private sector firms like DOLE filled the gap. They helped with superior technology, economies of scale, and profitable markets. The beneficiaries still owned their land, but leased this out to the firms and worked in partnership with them. They often get incomes four times more than they previously got.

In the Sumilao case, the legitimate farmers should be given the land that is rightfully theirs. But if the real purpose of agrarian reform is to improve the farmer's life, we must realize that "land to the tiller" is just a means to that end.

If the end is not achieved because of no support services, then true agrarian reform is subverted instead of accomplished.

The Sumilao farmers should look to San Miguel Corp. (SMC) with its world class support services as a partner, rather than an adversary. SMC should likewise realize the benefits of dealing with these farmers.

Given SMC's own estimated project cost of P2.4 billion, paying rent for the farmers' land may amount to only 1 to 2 percent of this cost. SMC can then continue with its project, at the same time contributing significantly to the real purpose of agrarian reform.

Process

With the agrarian reform purpose clear, a process must be instituted to achieve this end. We may be in the brink of a breakdown when the farmers themselves are not involved enough in this process.

This may be happening already, as evidenced by the main INQUIRER headline last

Dec. 23: "3-Party talks on Sumilao: Church, Palace, SMC haggle over price of land." Where are the farmers in this process?

This is precisely why the Alyansa Agrikultura was organized in 2003: To help ensure that the farmers' voice would be heard. Without the farmers in the process, even well intentioned people may not express the farmers' position accurately, thus giving the impression that farmers are ignorant and unreasonable.

When asked what would happen to the land where an SMC hog farm was being built, a Malacañang official was quoted as saying "Walang matitira (Nothing will be left)." It is probable that if the farmers themselves were asked, they would give a different answer and regard the hog farm as beneficial to them. A rental fee could be agreed upon, similar to what DOLE is now giving agrarian reform beneficiaries, to the advantage of both parties.

Product

If the purpose is clear and the appropriate process implemented, a win-win product will likely emerge. There are two important "product" issues that should be addressed.

The first is that the law should be followed, which potential investors will appreciate. This means that the land should be given to the farmers. This is consistent with the arguments given by legal luminaries such as former Ateneo Law Dean Father Joaquin Bernas SJ, and supported by an order from the Office of the President.

The second issue is that only legitimate claimants should get the land. If it is true that some of those who marched are not the rightful beneficiaries, they should be immediately replaced.

However, the possible presence of illegitimate claimants should not be used as an excuse to avoid the real issue of securing social justice. As printed on the Sumilao T-shirts, there are still 433,000 landless farmers in our country.

Peace and Prosperity

Sumilao can be a disaster. But it can also be a beacon of hope, showing how potential adversaries can unite in a win-win situation. With the right purpose, process and product, peace and prosperity will naturally follow. There will be peace because there will be no aggrieved party. The farmers can get their land, and SMC can continue its project.

There will be prosperity for all. With the goodwill earned by SMC and the Sumilao community squarely behind it, SMC can look towards prosperous times. The Sumilao farmers may well bless the day they partner with SMC, for they will get support services that may include access to technology, economies of scale and profitable markets.

Peace and prosperity can then reign, not only in Sumilao but in the rest of the country.

(The author is the chair of Agriwatch, former secretary for Presidential Flagship Programs and Projects, and former undersecretary for Agriculture, and Trade and Industry. For inquiries and suggestions, e-mail agriwatchphil@yahoo.com or telefax (02) 8522112).

Agriculture makes a comeback in '07

From page B1

2007 was due to its five-point farm agenda and other timely measures like the quick turnaround planting program, which contained the devastating impact of both natural and man-made calamities on farms.

The agenda included higher investments in irrigation and other infrastructure; post harvest facilities; research and development and agricultural extension work; rural credit, and the opening of more local and international markets for local produce.

Government spending for irrigation this year reached P3.1 billion, including foreign-assisted and locally financed projects.

As a result, the National Irrigation Administration was able to rehabilitate and repair irrigation facilities covering 53,758 hectares of arable land. The DA has earlier targeted 55,000 hectares.

As for farm-to-market roads, the DA built this year 1,616.76 kilometers of roads worth P3.2 billion.

To guarantee the quality of Philippine farm products and reduce post-production losses, the DA has earmarked P1 billion for about 1,000 units of various types of mechanical grain dryers, integrated post harvest processing centers and cold-chain facilities in major trading points.

In the area of R&D, the DA embarked on extensive studies on new technologies to further raise yields and planting areas through its various Ginintuang Masaganang Ani (GMA) programs.

GMA programs

For 2007, the outlay for the GMA Rice Program had reached P1.78 billion, enabling the DA to provide P1.05 billion worth of assistance to a million farmers in the form of production support services.

This led to an expansion in the total area planted to rice to 4.27 million hectares.

As for the GMA Corn Program, the P819-million allotment this year enabled the DA to extend P752 million worth of aid to corn farmers through production support, post-harvest and irrigation development services.

This led to an expansion in the total area planted to corn to 45,997 hectares.

But this year's defining moment for the DA was its ability to contain the adverse effects of the prolonged dry spell during the middle of the year, through its quick turnaround planting program.

The QTA program identified and made use of almost 100,000 hectares of arable land in non-affected farms in Visayas and Mindanao.

As a result, the DA managed to add 350,000 MT of palay and 200,000 MT of corn to this year's production.

As part of the emergency program, the DA provided P153 million worth of aid to about 67,000 affected farmers in the form of small water-impounding facilities, seed subsidies, shallow tube wells, cloud-seeding operations and repair of irrigation facilities.

In part, the program helped push for the local agriculture sector's impressive growth in the past three quarters.

New markets

This year, Yap put up agricultural trade desks to help overseas-based attachés in tapping more investments and markets for Philippine agricultural goods.

The DA also spearheaded the country's participation in several food exhibits and trade shows in Asia and Europe, which led to buying commitments for Philippine fruits, vegetables and processed food products.

Export winners like mangoes and other high-value commercial crops were able to penetrate more overseas markets this year, following the DA's efforts to ensure compliance with internationally accepted sanitary and phytosanitary standards.

In the case of mangoes, the DA was able to pave the way for the opening of new markets for this prime Philippine fruit export in the United States and China.

New markets for non-traditional Philippine exports like carageenan had been opened to include the Bahamas, Cambodia, Curacao, Greece, Guatemala, Jordan, Nicaragua, Nigeria and Ukraine. (To be continued)



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
SEC Bldg., EDSA, Greenhills, Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila
CORPORATION FINANCE DEPARTMENT

70
SFC-CFD ORDER No. 194
Series of 2007
Registration of Securities under
the Securities Regulation Code

IN THE MATTER OF THE
FIRST METRO SAVE & LEARN
EQUITY FUND, INC.

Registrant:

Upon consideration of the Registration Statement and other papers and documents attached thereto which were filed for and on behalf of FIRST METRO SAVE & LEARN EQUITY FUND, INC., the Commission, in its meeting of December 5, 2007, resolved to render effective the same for the registration of the First Metro Fifty Million (150,000,000) shares of common stock with a par value of P1.00 each, representing the latest increase in authorized capital stock, subject to compliance with the reporting and other requirements of the Securities Regulation Code, Investment Company Act and their implementing rules and regulations, Code of Corporate Governance and to further orders of the Securities and Exchange Commission and to applicable regulations of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

A Certificate of Permit to Offer Securities for Sale authorizing the sale of said securities is issued with this Order.

Let a copy of this ORDER be published at the expense of the corporation once a week for two (2) consecutive weeks in two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines within (10) days from the date of this ORDER. The subject company is hereby directed to furnish the Commission with a copy of the affidavit of publication of this ORDER.

SO ORDERED,

December 14, 2007, EDSA, Greenhills, City of Mandaluyong, Metro Manila, Philippines.

JUSTIN L. MALLANGAN
Chairman

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IN THE MATTER OF THE
APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF
THE RATES ADJUSTMENT IN
ACCORDANCE WITH THE
PROVISIONS OF R.A. 9136, WITH
PRAYER FOR PROVISIONAL
AUTHORITY

ERC CASE NO. 2007-152 RC

SURIGAO DEL SUR I ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE, INC. (SURSECO I),
Applicant,

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

Notice is hereby given that on October 18, 2007, the Surigao del Sur I Electric Cooperative, Inc. (SURSECO I) filed an application for the Commission's approval of its Rates Adjustment in accordance with Republic Act No. 9136, with prayer for provisional authority.

In its application, SURSECO I, alleges, among others, the following:

1. The steep rise in SURSECO I's operation and maintenance expenses and other costs has made it imperative to adjust its rates in order to achieve its updated revenue requirements. The proposed revenue requirements will not be attained if SURSECO I continues to use its existing unbundled rates of 2000;

2. There is a substantial adjustment in the revenue requirement for *Operation and Maintenance* because of inflationary/economic factors: official government data show a sharp increase in costs from 2000 to 2005 (e.g. fuel alone has risen by 300% compared to prices in 2000). The *Payroll* portion of the SURSECO I's operation and maintenance cost is the actual cost incurred for the 2005 test year;

3. The adjustment for debt service is aimed at recovering the existing loans with National Electrification Administration (NEA) that were availed of after June 26, 2001, which were not included in the loans condoned by Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation (PSALM Corp.); and

4. SURSECO I proposed a subsidy from non-lifeline consumers in the amount of PhP 0.1193/kWh.

Summarized below is the proposed schedule of rates and the estimated impact of the rate adjustment applied for on each customer class of the Distribution Utility:

Customer Class	Proposed Rates	Existing Rates	Difference
Residential:			
Distribution System Charge (Peso/kWh)	1.2939	1.2597	0.0342
Supply System Charge (Peso/kWh)	0.6588	0.6588	0
Metering System Charge (Peso/kWh)	0.1921	0.4908	(0.2987)
Metering Retail Charge (Peso/Meter/Month)	20.0000	5.0000	15.0000
Loan Condondation (Peso/kWh)		(0.4807)	0.4807
Total Peso Per kWh Charge	2.1448	1.9286	0.2162
Total Peso Per Customer/Month	20.0000	5.0000	15.0000
Average Rate Per kWh	2.5229	2.0231	0.4998
Small Commercial:			
Distribution System Charge (Peso/kWh)	0.9240	0.6913	0.0327
Supply System Charge (Peso/kWh)	36.2500	36.2500	-
Metering System Charge (Peso/kWh)	48.2000	48.2000	-
Loan Condondation (Peso/kWh)		(0.2709)	0.2709
Loan Condondation (Peso/Customer/Month)		(8.9738)	8.9738
Total Peso Per kWh Charge	0.9240	0.6204	0.3036
Total Peso Per Customer/Month	84.4500	75.4762	8.9738
Average Rate Per kWh	1.4217	1.0652	0.3565
Large Commercial:			
Distribution System Charge (Peso/kWh)	0.7967	0.7479	0.0488
Supply System Charge (Peso/kWh)	36.9700	36.9700	-
Metering System Charge (Peso/kWh)	79.0200	79.0200	-
Loan Condondation (Peso/kWh)		(0.2284)	0.2284
Loan Condondation (Peso/Customer/Month)		(14.4269)	14.4269
Total Peso Per kWh Charge	0.7967	0.5195	0.2772
Total Peso Per Customer/Month	115.9900	101.5631	14.4269
Average Rate Per kWh	0.9023	0.6120	0.2903
Industrial:			
Distribution System Charge (Peso/kWh)	19.8000	19.8000	-
Supply System Charge (Peso/kWh)	0.8462	0.8091	0.0371
Metering System Charge (Peso/kWh)	104.3300	104.3300	-
Metering Retail Charge (Peso/Meter/Month)	268.8800	268.8800	-
Loan Condondation (Peso/kWh)		(0.2818)	0.2818
Loan Condondation (Peso/Customer/Month)		(48.0912)	48.0912
Total Peso Per kWh Charge	19.8000	19.8000	-
Total Peso Per Customer/Month	0.8462	0.5273	0.3189
Average Rate Per kWh	373.2100	325.1908	48.0192
Average Rate Per kWh	1.2369	0.9154	0.3215
Public Building:			
Distribution System Charge (Peso/kWh)	0.8663	0.7720	0.0943
Supply System Charge (Peso/kWh)	35.7400	35.7400	-
Metering System Charge (Peso/kWh)	63.8700	63.8700	-
Metering Retail Charge (Peso/Meter/Month)		(0.2348)	0.2348
Loan Condondation (Peso/kWh)		(11.7472)	11.7472
Total Peso Per kWh Charge	0.8663	0.5372	0.3291
Total Peso Per Customer/Month	99.6100	87.8628	11.7472
Average Rate Per kWh	1.2221	0.8511	0.3710
Street Light:			
Distribution System Charge (Peso/kWh)	2.7345	2.3800	0.3545
Supply System Charge (Peso/kWh)	35.9700	35.9700	-
Metering System Charge (Peso/kWh)	30.1600	26.2200	3.9400
Metering Retail Charge (Peso/Meter/Month)		(0.2613)	0.2613
Loan Condondation (Peso/kWh)		(0.5985)	0.5985
Total Peso Per kWh Charge	2.7345	2.1187	0.6158
Total Peso Per Customer/Month	66.1300	61.5915	4.5385
Average Rate Per kWh	2.8173	2.1991	0.6182
Sale for Resale:			
Distribution System Charge (Peso/kWh)	0.6304	0.1519	0.4785
Supply System Charge (Peso/kWh)	36.5000	36.5000	-
Metering System Charge (Peso/kWh)	141.5200	141.5200	-
Metering Retail Charge (Peso/Meter/Month)		(0.4643)	0.4643
Loan Condondation (Peso/kWh)		(0.4914)	0.4914
Total Peso Per kWh Charge	0.6304	0.1056	0.5248
Total Peso Per Customer/Month	178.0200	136.0086	142.0114
Average Rate Per kWh Charge	0.6679	0.1132	0.5547
Over-all Average Rate Per kWh	2.0738	1.6263	0.4475

The Commission has set the application for initial hearing, pre-trial conference, expository presentation and evidentiary hearing on January 17 to 18, 2008 (Thursday and Friday) at two o'clock in the afternoon (2:00 P.M.) and ten o'clock in the morning (10:00 A.M.), respectively, at SURSECO I's Office at Barangay San Fernando, City of Bislig, Surigao del Sur.

All persons who have an interest in the subject matter of the proceeding may become a party by filing, at least five (5) days prior to the initial hearing and subject to the requirements in the ERC's Rules of Practice and Procedure, a verified petition with the Commission giving the docket number and the title of the proceeding and stating: (1) the petitioner's name and address; (2) the nature of petitioner's interest in the subject matter of the proceeding, and the way and manner in which such interest is affected by the issues involved in the proceeding; and (3) a statement of the relief desired.

All other persons who may want their views known to the Commission with the respect to the subject matter of the proceeding may file their opposition to the application or comment thereon at any stage of the proceeding before the applicant concludes the presentation of its evidence. No particular form of opposition or comment is required, but the document, letter or writing should contain the name and address of such person and concise statement of the opposition or comment and the grounds relied upon.

All such persons who may wish to have a copy of the application may request the applicant, prior to the date of the initial hearing, that they be furnished with a copy of the application. The applicant is hereby directed to furnish all those making such request with copies of the application and its attachments, subject to reimbursement of reasonable photocopying costs. Likewise, any such person may examine the application and other pertinent records filed with the Commission during the usual office hours.

WITNESS, the Honorable, RODOLFO B. ALBANO, JR., Chairman, and the Honorable Commissioners, ALEJANDRO Z. BARIN, RAUF A. TAN, MARIA TERESA A.R. CASTANEDA and JOSE C. REYES, Energy Regulatory Commission, this 22nd of November, 2007 at Pasig City.

(Sgd.) FRANCIS SATURNINO C. JUAN
Executive Director

Gov't cuts BOC collection goal

2008 target now down by ₱19 billion to ₱235.68B

By Michelle V. Remo

THE CONTINUED STRENGTHENING OF the peso has prompted the national government to slash by about ₱19 billion the collection target of the Bureau of Customs for 2008.

From the original target of ₱254.48 billion, a source from the Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC) said the government brought down the collection target for BOC to ₱235.68 billion.

The source said the DBCC, an inter-agency body that sets the country's macroeconomic and fiscal goals, was expected to announce the revision soon.

The reduction in the BOC's collection target followed an earlier decision of the DBCC to revise its foreign-exchange assumption for 2008. The DBCC had originally assumed that the exchange rate would average be-

tween 47 and 49 versus the US dollar. It later revised this to between 42 and 45 to \$1.

Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales earlier said it was unfair to ask the BOC to meet the original target if the peso would continue to strengthen.

Based on BOC calculation, he said, the bureau was losing ₱2.7 billion in potential revenue for every unit of appreciation of the local currency against the US dollar.

According to DBCC estimates, the BOC was losing ₱3 billion for every unit of appreciation of the peso.

The amount of duties and taxes collected by the BOC is based on the peso value of imports. The strengthening of the local currency, therefore, means lesser collection in peso terms.

The cut in the BOC's target also came after the DBCC reduced its imports growth forecast for 2008 from 11 to 9 percent. This

took into account the expected slowdown in global demand, which would result in lower exports and reduced need for imported raw materials.

In the meantime, the DBCC raised the collection target of the Bureau of Internal Revenue for next year by ₱500 million. From the original goal of ₱844.9 billion, the BIR is now tasked to collect ₱844.95 billion next year.

The DBCC official said the BIR's target had to be increased because the economic growth forecast was revised upward.

The economy, in terms of gross domestic product, was originally expected to grow by between 6.1 and 6.8 percent, but is now seen to expand by between 6.3 and 7 percent.

The growth in BIR collection is supposedly directly proportional to that of the economy's. This is because a higher economic growth means an increase in taxable corporate and household income.

Including the collection goals of other agencies, the government's tax revenue target for next year was placed at ₱1.09 trillion. The original target was placed at ₱1.09 trillion.

Strong peso stunts export growth this year

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE EXPORT SECTOR IS SEEN TO POST A mere 6-percent growth this year as industry members, especially small-scale businesses, reel from the impact of the rising peso on their earnings.

Sergio Ortiz-Luis Jr., president of the Philippine Exporters Confederation, said in an interview that the sector would not be able to meet the target of 8 percent for the whole year.

Ortiz-Luis said such a performance was telling of how exporters were really suffering from the appreciation of the peso, considering that the industry had set an original growth target of 11 percent at the start of the year.

"Aside from foreign exchange, factors affecting growth include the weakening of the market, particularly that of the United States," he said.

In Philexport's online publication, Ortiz-Luis was quoted as saying that a growth rate of 6 percent was "still possible," adding that even if shipments in November and December grew, this would not make a significant impact on the overall exports revenue for the year.

Ortiz-Luis noted that exports growth for the 10 months ending in October averaged 5.4 percent despite the double-digit 10.5-percent growth in October.

"The figures in October are deceptive (because) deliveries were ordered three months back when the dollar was at about ₴44," he said. "Paid when the forex rate was nearing ₴42 to the dollar, October deliveries were made at a loss."

Earlier this month, PhilExport renewed calls for export groups to tap a ₱250-million fund to counter effects of a continually rising peso.

\$3.3-B MRT . . . From page B1

as well as commercial and real estate development around the route of the rail system.

The main proponent, Universal LRT Corp., brings together the resources of the SM Group of Companies, Megawold Corp. and Israeli businessman Eli Levin. International Finance Corp., the private funding arm of the World Bank, has also shown interest in funding the

OBITUARIES

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the way,
the truth
and
the life.
No one
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to the
Father
except
through
Me.

John 14:6

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ADELAIDA ALDANA MAYOR

CHILDREN:
ALFRED & FRAN, LOTLOT & DANNY, ANTHONY, JOSEPH

GRANDCHILDREN:
KEVIN, KENNETH, DAVE, KELSEY, KERSTIN & ALYSSA

HIS BODY LIES IN STATE AT HOLY TRINITY MEMORIAL CHAPEL, DR. A. SANTOS AVE., SUCAT, PARAÑAQUE. INTERMENT WILL BE ON DECEMBER 29, 2007, SATURDAY AT 1:00 P.M. AT MANILA MEMORIAL PARK, SUCAT, PARAÑAQUE.

I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly. — John 10:10

Dr. Teresita "Telly" Cosaclang Perez

of Caloocan Norte, Binmaley Pangasinan peacefully joined our Lord on December 23, 2007 at the age of 75.

Her loving husband Brig. Gen. Valerio Perez; children Rosemarie, Teodorico, Teresa, Carol, Jojo, Gica, Gene and daughters and sons-in-law Barry; Susan, Leah, Marie, Nilda, Raymond, Buddy, Gloria together with brothers Noli and Edith, Lito, Camilo and Pepe, grandchildren, relatives and friends, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul and comfort for the family.

Her remains lie in state at Caloocan Norte, Binmaley, Pangasinan.

Mass will be held on December 30, 2007, 2 p.m. at the Binmaley Parish church. Interment will follow right after at Binmaley Memorial Park.

DEATH NOTICE**NELSON ABEL DY LOA**

February 18, 1941 – December 23, 2007

Peacefully joined our Creator at the age of 66

His remains lie in state at the Arlington Memorial Chapels, Inc. #12 G. Araneta Ave., Quezon City Cremation will be on Sunday, December 30, 2007, 1:00 PM at the Chinese Crematory Manila

Secretary Arturo D. Brion

and the Officials and Staff of the

Department of Labor and Employment

express their deepest condolences
to the family and friends
of

Adrian E. Cristobal, Sr.

Former Labor Secretary, SSS Chairman, Presidential Spokesman, Academician, Publisher, Journalist, and Writer

who joined our Creator last December 22, 2007 at the age of 75.

A funeral mass is scheduled at the Santuario de San Antonio in Forbes Park, Makati City on December 28, 2007.

The entire DOLE Family mourns the passing away of one of the country's greatest intellectuals and devoted public servant, and asks everyone to offer prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

CLASSIFIEDS

Republic of the Philippines

Department of Agriculture

Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources

3rd Floor PCA Bldg. Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO RE-BID

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Department of Agriculture (DA-BFAR) invites bona fide suppliers to apply for eligibility and to re-bid for "Eleven (11) units Computer Desktop, One (1) unit Laptop and Fourteen (14) Units Fortigate 60 Bundle" with an Approved Budget Contract (ABC) PhP2,022,000.00

The Bid documents shall be available at the BFAR Property Section starting January 3 to January 9, 2008 upon payment of non-refundable fee in the amount of P1,000.00

Eligibility documents, technical and financial proposals in three envelopes must be submitted to the BFAR-BAC Secretariat, PCA Compound, Diliman, Quezon City not later than 2:00 PM on January 17, 2008 and shall be opened at the Office of the BFAR-BAC Chairman, 3rd Flr, PCA Main Building, Diliman, Quezon City, on the same date in the presence of the participating bidders who wish to attend.

For more information, please call the BAC-Secretariat at Tel. No. 425-31-68.

BFAR reserves the right to waive any informality in the response to the eligibility requirements and to this invitation. BFAR further reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, or declare a failure, or not award the contract and makes no assurance that contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) MALCOLM I. SARMIENTO, JR.

Director

(PDI - Dec. 28, 2007)



Republic of the Philippines

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

National Capital Region

DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

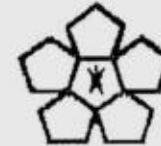
Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National / Citizenship	Position
ASIAN DREAM LINK PROJECT COMPANY INC. 49 Doña Soledad Ave., Better Living, Paraaque City	Atsushi Kadoi Japanese	Manager
LEVEL UP! INC. 11/F Pacific Star Bldg., Sen. Gil Puyat cor. Makati Avenues, Makati City	Hye Won Kim Korean	Games and Server Manager
ALPASTRA CORP. 325 Honorio Lopez Blvd., Balut, Tondo, Manila	Lihua Zhang Chinese	Purchasing Manager
ALPASTRA CORP. 325 Honorio Lopez Blvd., Balut, Tondo, Manila	Xinxin Chen Chinese	General Manager
TONINO CORP. 605 Madrid St., San Nicolas, Binondo, Manila	Zhenxiong Xu Chinese	General Manager
TONINO CORP. 605 Madrid St., San Nicolas, Binondo, Manila	Huihuang Qiu Chinese	Warehouse Supervisor
URBAN PROGRAM FOR LIVELIHOOD FINANCE & TRAINING (UPLIFT) PHILS. 172 A. Mabini St., Mayapao, Caloocan City	Thomas Jean Raoul Mouliac French	Technical Officer
NIIGATA POWER SYSTEMS PHILIPPINES, INC. 8/F Citibank Center, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City Caloocan City	Tsuyoshi Okamura Japanese	Technical Consultant on Maintenance of Diesel Power Plants

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

RAYMUNDO G. AGRAVANTE
OIC, Regional Director

(PDI - December 28, 2007)



Republic of the Philippines

NATIONAL HOME MORTGAGE FINANCE CORPORATION

5/F Filomena Building III

104 Amorsolo Street, Legaspi Village Makati City

AN INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation ("NHMFC"), through the Bids and Awards Committee ("BAC"), invites all interested investment houses and banks to register for eligibility and to bid for the following roles: 1. Arranger; 2. Underwriter; 3. Trustee; 4. Registrar, Custodian in relation to the Securitization of the Low-Delinquency Loan Portfolio of the National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation tentatively scheduled for June 2008. Parties may bid for more than one role.

Interested parties must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) with Application for Eligibility to the Bids and Award Committee through the BAC Secretariat on or before January 04, 2008.

The eligibility requirements may be obtained for a non-refundable fee of One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00) per bid document at the BAC Secretariat starting January 07, 2008. The eligibility of registered bidders shall be evaluated using a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria based on the eligibility requirements. Eligibility requirements/documents shall be submitted in a sealed envelope to the BAC Secretariat to the above-mentioned address. The eligibility envelope shall be opened on January 14, 2008.

The bid documents shall be available at the BAC Secretariat starting January 16, 2008 upon payment of the non-refundable fee of Ten Thousand Pesos (P10,000.00) per bid document. The Pre-bid Conference shall be held on January 18, 2008, 2:00 P.M. at the 5/F Board Room of the National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation. Opening of bids shall be on January 23, 2008 at 12:00 noon at the Board Room, 5th Floor, Filomena Building III, 104 Amorsolo Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City.

NHMFC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality/defect therein, and to accept such bid as may be deemed most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) DAISY S. DULAY
BAC Chairman

Noted by:

(Sgd.) JOSEPH PETER S. SISON
President

(PDI - Dec. 28, 2007)

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given of the loss of Philippine Passport # KK78469 issued to Anita P. Tolentino issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs last January 14, 2003 and valid until January 2008. The said passport was stolen last November 25, 2007.

(PDI - Dec. 28, 2007)

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BUSINESS

Manufacturing posts year-on-year drop in output

By Michelle V. Remo

THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR continues to perform poorly, sustaining a year-on-year drop in volume of production in October, data from the National Statistics Office showed.

Manufacturing output, measured in terms of volume, dropped 1.7 percent in October from a year ago, according to the NSO's Monthly Integrated Survey on Selected Industries (MissI).

The -1.7-percent Volume of Production Index (VoPI) in October, however, marked a slowdown from the -2.7 percent recorded the previous month.

Production volume slips 1.7% in Oct.

In terms of value, manufacturing output slightly rose in October from a year ago due to moderate increase in domestic prices. The Value of Production Index (VaPI), which measures output in terms of value and takes inflation into account, hit +0.7 percent during the month.

The NSO said sub-sectors in the manufacturing industry that recorded the highest growth in volume of production were the following: Wood and wood products (which posted a year-

on-year growth of 66.8 percent), transport equipment (23.9 percent), beverages (21.7 percent), leather products (20.4 percent), and petroleum products (19.2 percent).

But the gains were canceled out due to the losses posted by other sub-sectors. Those that registered the biggest drop were: tobacco (down by 36.7 percent), textiles (20.5 percent), basic metals (19.2 percent), footwear and wearing apparel (15.9 percent), and electrical machinery (15.2 percent).

The continued drop in the manufacturing sector's output was not consistent with the robust growth of the economy. Some economists said the inconsistency raised doubts on the accuracy of the reported growth of the economy, while others said it just indicated the dwindling contribution of the manufacturing sector to the growth of the overall economy.

The economy, measured in terms of gross domestic product, grew by 7.1 percent in the first three quarters of the year from the same period in 2006. In the third quarter alone, GDP growth hit 6.6 percent.

Dutch bank sees rosier '08 for RP

By Doris C. Dumla

DUTCH FINANCIAL GIANT ING IS UPBEAT on the Philippines for the coming year and beyond, convinced that the country—once tagged the sick man of Asia—has now shifted from a cycle of “recovery” to “growth.”

In a recent presentation, ING Philippines chief investment officer Paul Joseph Garcia identified five sectors which would likely become key engines of growth for the country from 2008 to 2010—business process outsourcing (BPO), mining, tourism, property/construction and banking.

“A low-cost, English speaking workforce is one of the catalyst for the Philippines in becoming the preferred source of global BPO demand,” Garcia said.

Supported by a strong telecommunications infrastructure, he said the country’s BPO segment had grown to a \$3.5-billion industry and would likely expand further by 35 percent until 2010 to \$12.2 billion.

Also, Garcia said the mining sector regained its luster following the landmark Supreme Court ruling, which allowed 100 percent foreign ownership in mining firms. The decision prompted the likes of BHP Billiton, Anglo American, Indophil Resources and Lafayette Mining to set up shop in the country.

He noted that the Philippines was among the most mineralized countries in the world—ranking second in gold, third in copper, fifth in nickel and sixth in chromite. At present, only 5 percent of mineralized areas are being utilized.

“[The] government aims to accelerate Philippine mining projects and address existing environmental concerns,” he said.

The mining sector’s extractable resources are estimated at \$840 billion, or about 10 times of the country’s gross domestic product.

Tourism is also seen as a potential engine for growth.

Philippine tourist arrival this year had risen by 8.8 percent, from the recorded 2.8 million that arrived in 2006. Arrival is expected to hit 3.15 million for 2007, and up to 3.62 million next year.

Gov’t responds to debate on food vs fuel

By Abigail L. Ho

THE NATIONAL BIOFUELS BOARD, AN ENTITY created by the Biofuels Act of 2006, is expected to come up with a policy statement on the “food vs. fuel debate,” which remains a huge deterrent to the development of the local biofuels sector.

Sen. Juan Miguel Zubiri, the law’s author, said he would ask the NBB to come out with a policy. He said he would also seek its assurance that biofuels production would not affect the country’s food supply.

Jatropha, for example, is a biofuel feedstock that can help provide the country’s biodiesel requirements without compromising food security as the crop is inedible.

“Jatropha is a wonder crop,” Zubiri said. “It can be one of the cures to cutting down trees for charcoal. It also won’t compete with food.”

Even sugarcane, which is the main feedstock being eyed for local ethanol production, can circumvent the food vs. fuel debate, he said.

“Sugarcane isn’t really a main food source,” Zubiri said. “We can just convert our sugarcane into ethanol, turn it into a high-value crop. If it would be cheaper to import sugar, then let’s just import sugar and use our sugarcane for fuel.”

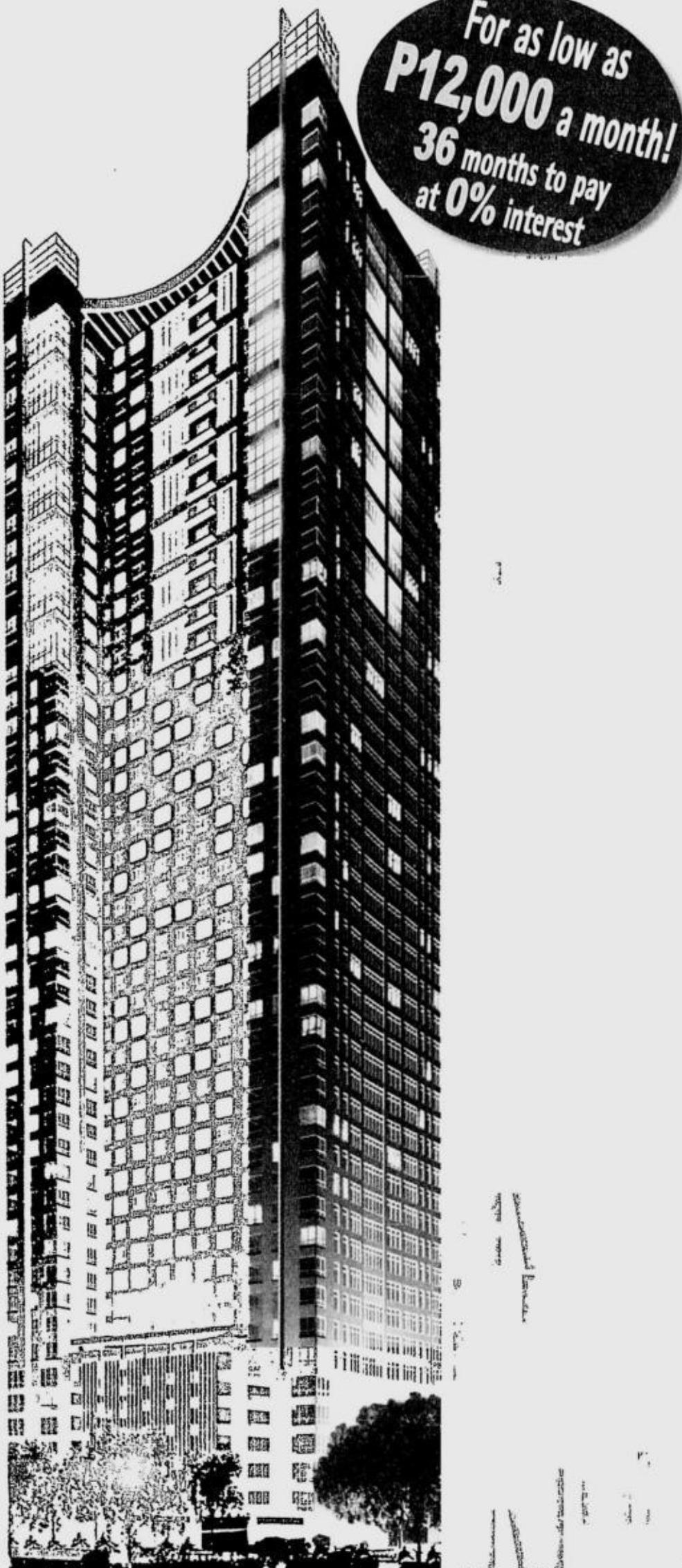
However, he said the search for alternative ethanol feedstock should still be continued. Feedstock, other than sugarcane and cassava, should be explored.

The NBB has been given an initial budget of P90 million for 2008, which will form part of the Department of Energy’s P3.6-billion 2008 obligation budget.

Under the Biofuels Law, the NBB will serve as the chief overseer of the government’s alternative fuels program.

The law mandates it to ensure the supply and quality of biofuels, and to recommend any increase in the volume of biofuels to be blended with gasoline and diesel.

The NBB is composed of officials from the departments of energy, finance, trade and industry, agriculture, labor and employment, and Science and Technology, as well as those from the Sugar Regulatory Administration and the Philippine Coconut Authority.



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LIFESTYLE

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso



Special Edition
LIFESTYLE
December 28, 2007

DRESS by Ronaldo Arnaldo
(0917-5259823); ring
by D from House of Laurel

Who's afraid of the big bad girl?

HERE'S SOMETHING TO REMEMBER before you start hitting the New Year party circuit: Good girls go to heaven, and bad girls go everywhere.

Yes, you can leave the coy maids-a-milkin' ensemble (and attitude) in your stocking because, as the champagne pours and the countdown starts, the badder you are, the better you look.

I'm talking party dresses, of course!

Say goodbye to all the shapeless baby-doll dresses and trapeze and tent dresses that have flooded the stores this past season because the fashion powerhouses are already declaring them deader than the ghost of Christmas past.

Expect the designs to shift to more tailored, more structured pieces in metallics and sequins. It's a refreshing change—a more modern look probably inspired by Victoria Spice and Beyoncé's penchant for hourglass dresses.

It goes without saying that shapelier dresses mean bringing sexy back. Hemlines will go south but will still show some skin as they stop a few inches above the knee.

That means time to show off those legs and that waist once more! Resurrect that dusty ab workout video now—you can't continue hiding that tummy under a trapeze.

WHO'S AFRAID/C2



DRESS by Zona Sul; bag by Aranaz; ring by D from House of Laurel; shoes by Aldo

year-end spectacular offer

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 5087 Series of 2007

If you want to break out of the Little Black Dress mold, make the party guests blush with an LRD (little red dress)

DRESS by Lyle Ibañez (0916-6114916); gloves by Carolina's; ring by Aldo; sunglasses by Ksubi from Greyone Social; shoes by Aldo



DRESS by Jon Herrera (0917-8337625); gloves by Carolina's; necklace by Aranaz; ring by D from House of Laurel; shoes by Aldo

Who's afraid of the big bad girl?

BOLERO and dress by Puey Quiñones; bangles from House of Laurel; shoes by Aldo



From page C1

I suggest that if you want to break out of the Little Black Dress mold, make the party guests blush with an LRD (little red dress).

In this fashion spread inspired by the classic fairytale "Little Red Riding Hood," with dresses from Puey Quiñones, Ronaldo Arnaldo, Zona Sul, Lyle Ibañez, Jon Herrera and Charina Sarte, notice how the uber-passionate red stands out in beautiful, structured dresses.

Red, red lipstick instantly vamps up a classic LBD as well, and adds a powerful statement to an otherwise pristine white dress. Inspired pieces or accessories supercharge the party quotient—satin gloves, sky-high, patent peep-toe shoes, and, of course, skin sparklers for that added bling.

Honorable mention goes to Quiñones' festive red bolero featured here, which magically makes any outfit extraordinary.

Versatility is a crucial component this season. A little creativity with mixing and matching can get you far off into February. But more than simply a change in shapes and hemlines, the bigger change to celebrate this coming year should be you—a better perspective, a more positive outlook, greater glamour.

Now that is more than enough reason to party!

E-mail the author at jfashion@inquirer.com.ph

Photography Tom Epperson of Snapbox
Styling Rosario Herrera
Makeup Al de Leon
Hair Leo Tambourine of Toni and Guy
Model Theresa Herrera



CAPE by Puey Quiñones (0916-7763098); gloves from Carolina's; bracelets by D and ring by Aras, all from House of Laurel



DRESS by Charina Sarte (0917-8460007); brooch and ring by D from House of Laurel; bag by Aranaz

FRIDAY,
DECEMBER 28, 2007LIFESTYLE — C
FASHION FORUM FASHION FORUM

What's your style resolution for 2008?



I resolve to continue my quest to encourage individual style and not succumb to trends; to influence more people to live in color, as this will ultimately make them happier, more attractive and ultimately photogenic. I will continue to indulge my wanderlust by traveling and seeing the world as much as possible. I believe that the best education and exposure one can gain is from truly experiencing different cultures up close and personal.

Rafe Totengco, designer

I hereby resolve to:
—Always harness the subtle power of fashion to fulfill whatever ulterior motive I harbor at the moment.

—Organize, organize, organize. Creative clutter does indeed spontaneity, but the state of having "a place for everything and everything in its place" has been an eternal quest! I never have time to organize, and so I lose time because I'm not organized. Life is too short for this vicious cycle.

—Present my best self to the world come hell, high water, or holy deadline day.

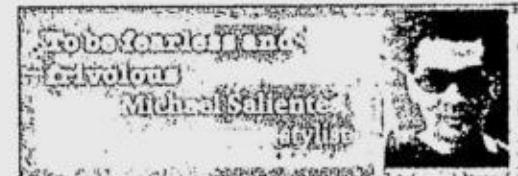
—In the spirit of S/S '08, attempt to conquer my life-long resistance to: white, pastels, and pale neutrals, which somehow just wash me out.

Myra Sison, editor-in-chief, Marie Claire/
editorial director, Summit Media



To be more conscious of my purchase decisions; to buy pieces that are environmentally friendly; to buy more Filipino-designed pieces; to wear Tepifa (piña from Palawan) on special occasions, as I believe every Filipina should have some clothes made of indigenous fabric in her closet. I also want a dress-driven wardrobe for summer 2008.

Patrice Ramos-Diaz, designer



To fight the urge to be accessory-lazy!

Mia Ayesa,
model/PMAP member

Hooray for the traditionalists and conformists! In a generation of overstyling and experimentation, I think I'll opt for a well-groomed classic look, and just throw in a few touches and details to show mood and personality. For example, a classic sports coat and contrast slacks worn with an '80s ukay-ukay-find Cordero for men popsicle orange shirt.

Jan Garcia, designer

Because I've filled out in the right places this year, my fashion resolution is to try out dresses in various cuts, shapes and patterns (unlike in the past when I always wore fail-safe figure-hugging frocks!). But of course, I will still be dressing appropriately in the workplace.

Maureen Disini,
fashion editor, Philippine Tatler

To project, affect, and effect my own sense of style. And to minimize buying dresses and invest on tops.

Kat Cruz, fashion editor,
Chalk Magazine

In 2008, let's support our own. Buy Filipino!

Ronald Pineda,
retailer,
Folded & Hung

My friends and I are trying to pull together a look that's not too matchy-matchy and put together. I want to continue trying new combinations next year, without being the fool ways in good taste.

Patty Estrella,
model, Enhance International

To put more colors in my wardrobe. Create fashion statements away from merely black, gray or white.

Robbie Carmona, director

I would like to use new applications and embellishments in my clothes, giving them a newer and fresher design approach. I will experiment with new silhouettes and do a lot of variations with fabrics and textures. I also plan to introduce new details and innovations with menswear.

Randy Ortiz, designer

I'll support styling for a cause. I'll also keep supporting Pinoy brands and designers.

Millet Arzaga, INQUIRER
Fashion contributing stylist

I want to transform my look, from wearing skirts to wearing dresses but still not look feminine or like a cross-dresser. That's the look I want to achieve for 2008: the masculine dress. And for work, I want to be organized, to take notes, and hopefully have a smooth life.

Puey Quiñones, designer



To invest in a basic wardrobe that is of good quality and will last, materially and style-wise, without sacrificing my comfort.

Nicolette Bell, model/
international flight attendant

To keep my wardrobe simple by investing on more classic pieces.

Phoemela Barranda,
model/
TV host

Sparkling New Year's Eve Countdown

Ramon "RJ" Jacinto at Dusit Hotel Nikko

Move and groove to the music of RJ Jacinto as he performs his signature repertoire and welcome 2008 with a bang on December 31 at the Grand Ballroom.

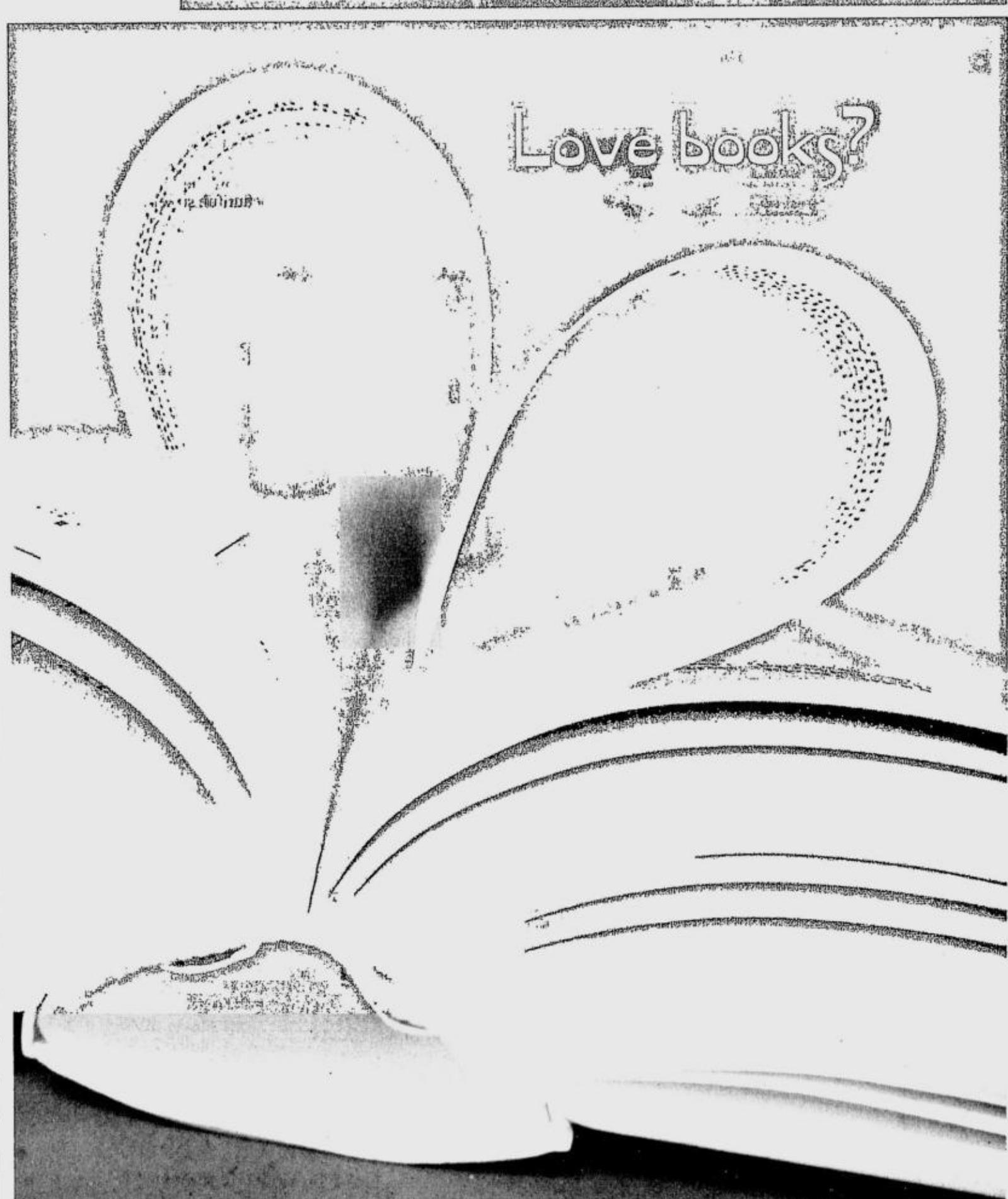
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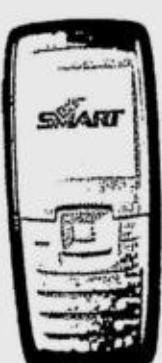
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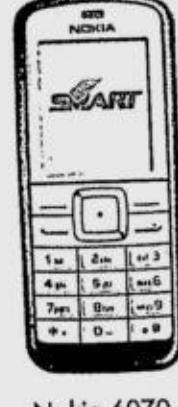
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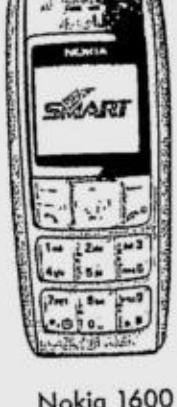
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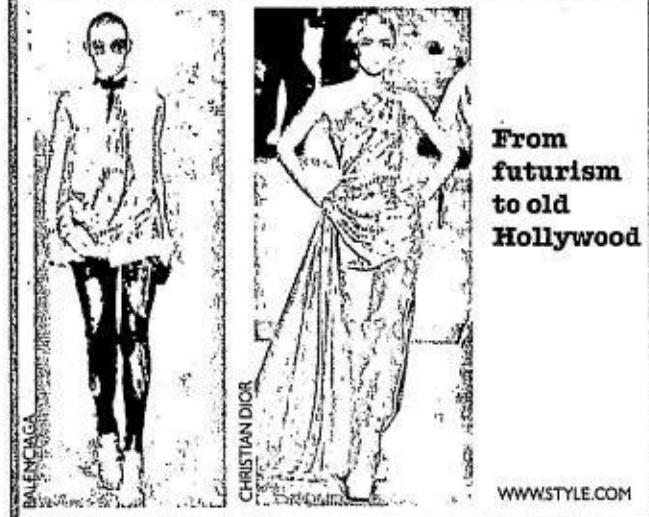
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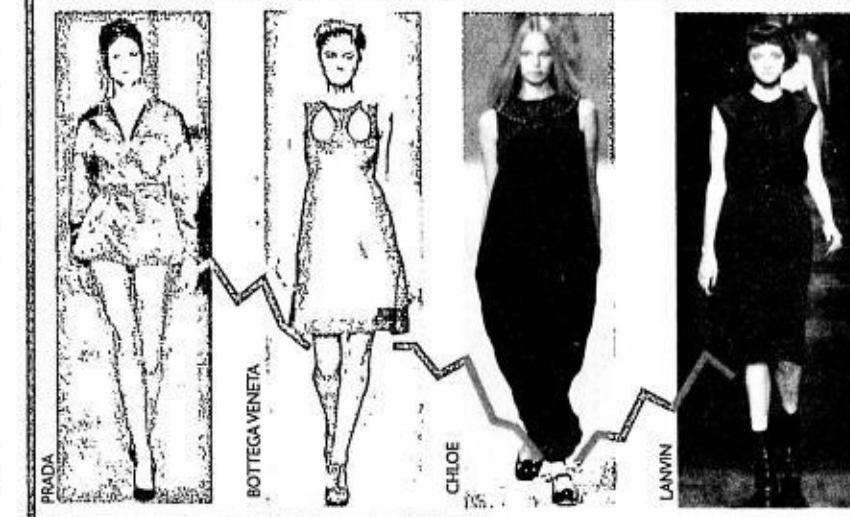
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PATRICE
Ramos-Diaz uses indigenous materials like abaca and piña in modern ways



CEBU designers hold their own against Manila's best.

The year that was in fashion

Never has the local scene seemed more interesting and promising

FASHION IN 2007 was a study in contrasts.

While the year opened with cocoon silhouettes and baby-doll dresses, it closed with body-conscious pieces that looked like they were sprayed on.

While futuristic fashions ruled the runway for Spring/Summer, an obvious return to glamour and old Hollywood was apparent in the Fall/Winter showing.

Hemlines soared to high heavens in early 2007 and plateaued to an acceptable mid-thigh length come mid-summer. It moved downward to reach maxi proportions during the tailend of summer, and by year's end, it was back to a demure midi length.

Even the general trend in fashion was a juxtaposition of

luxurious decadence and downright social and environmental consciousness.

Ironic as it may seem, Anya Hindmarch's "I am not a plastic bag" shared the limelight with indulgent and ultra-expensive crocodile bags.

The local fashion scene saw the growth of the retail market, thanks to developments like the Filipino Zone in Greenbelt 5.

Although designer ready-to-wear has always been available in department stores like Rustan's or SM, the emergence of specialty boutiques that offer limited pieces by some of the country's top designers is a sure sign of a stronger demand for locally designed items.

The year also witnessed the strong presence of Cebu-based designers in the Manila fashion scene. Cary Santiago, Jun Escario and Fern One, all from Cebu, wowed the jaded fashionista crowd, together with the likes of Ivarluski Aseron, Joey Samson and Rhett Eala, to name a few.

Modern masters Inno Sotto



Apples' Aberin Sadhwani

and Auggie Cordero also proved why they remained at the top of the heap by staging solo shows that were well-covered and well-attended by Manila's fashion elite.

Meanwhile, the Professional Models Association of the Philippines celebrated 20 years in the industry by staging a grand gala show that was participated in by 20 of the country's most sought after designers, and five genera-

tions of models.

While the likes of Ping Fideris, Tina Maristela and Leo Rabago ruled the runways when the association was first established, current designer fave Mia Ayesa is just about ready to take supermodel honors.

Fail-safe marketing

Celebrity endorsers were all over the news in 2007 as well. Although Bench was way ahead of the pack when it signed on Richard Gomez some 20 years ago, others continue to latch on to the fail-safe way of marketing one's brand.

As such, top endorser KC



FASHION for a cause: Jenni Epperson's eco-tote bags; KC Concepcion and Tin Yap's artist fair; and I Can Serve Foundation's Tickled Pink Bazaar



Sparkle and shine

By Bianca Consunji
Contributor

THE NEW YEAR IS THE BEST time to anticipate fresh starts. Each year provides a clean slate where people can start things over.

Of course, it wouldn't do to welcome the year dressed in dull, drab clothing. Some people start January by surrounding themselves with circle-shape food such as oranges and grapes, while others dress up in polka-dot clothes.

For the incoming year's celebration, ditch the polka dots and go for glitz instead. Attract light and energy to your look by choosing clothes that literally make you shine.

Although nothing beats jewelry for sheer "wow" factor, up the ante a bit by throwing on garments with light-reflecting material (such as shiny cloth and embellishments).

To stand out and shine in a crowded New Year's party, pick jewel-toned dresses in shiny material. Silk and satin are your best bets, although you can also try to find other materials with thin metallic threads woven in-



SUE WONG Nocturne black and gold dress with beads and sequins (P19,500); Caparros gold sandals (P3,450)

to them.

Not into shiny clothes? Matte dresses are fine, but try to find embellishments that can capture light and throw it around the room (when you're in a

room full of Tivoli lights and candles, that's pretty easy).

Sequins, glass beads and rhinestones are best, but avoid looking ostentatious by choosing dresses with small, shiny pieces, as nothing screams matrona more than a giant chunk of bling.

Finish off your look with equally sparkly accessories, like diamond earrings, strings of pearls, or thin gold or silver necklaces. Braver souls can get away with large gold cuffs or cocktail rings with semi-precious stones.

Footwear with a bit of additional sparkle such as sequins and beads can also put extra spring in your step, and can literally make you glow from head to toe.

E-mail the author at bianca-consunji@yahoo.com



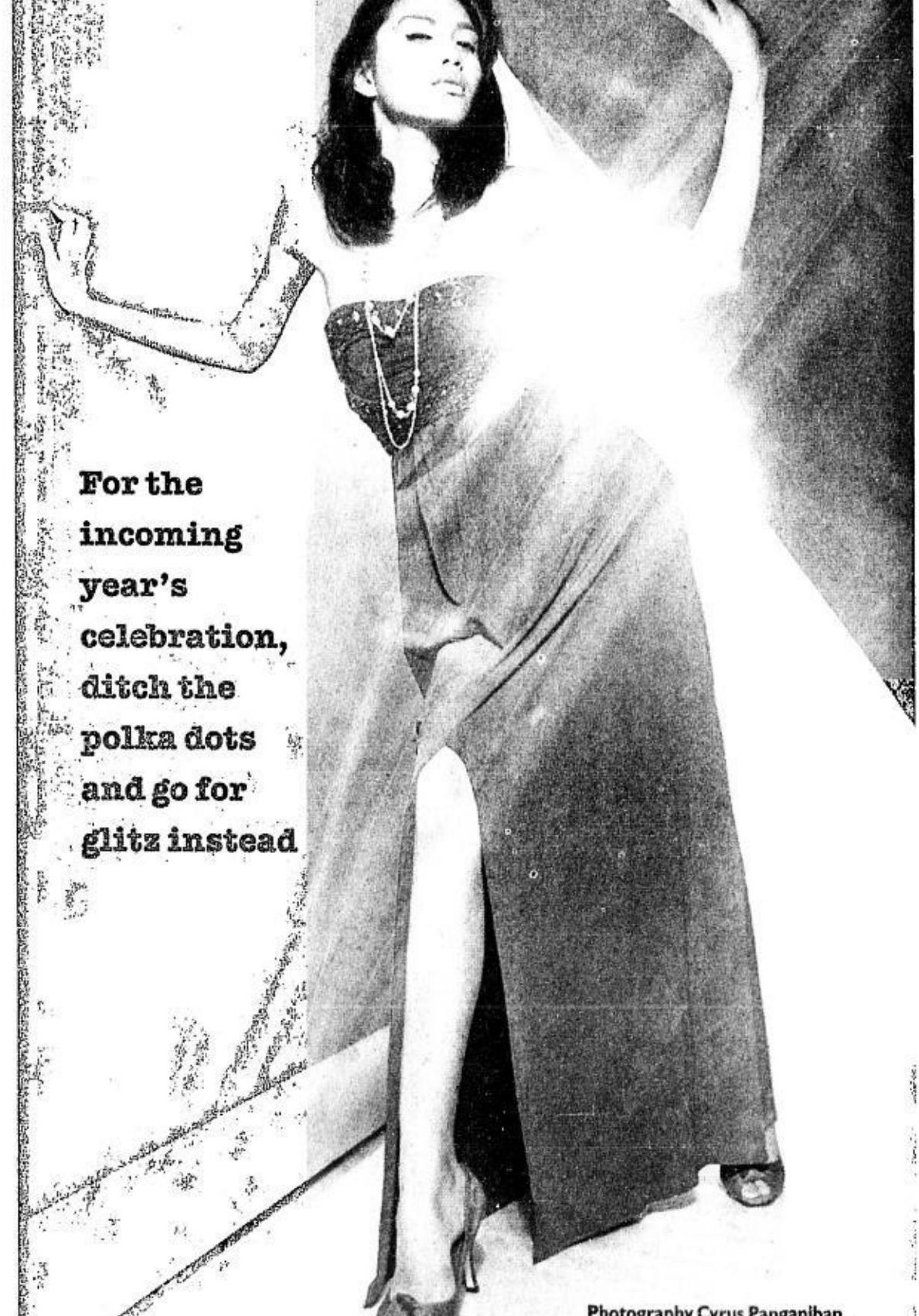
NITELINE moss-green satin layered dress with beaded bustier from Rustan's Dress Salon (P24,500); Caparros gold sandals (P3,450)



ERIC de los Santos purple gown (price available upon request, tel. 0920-9264342); Caparros purple satin pumps (P3,450)



ERIC de los Santos beaded piña dress; Ensembles faux pearl necklace (P495); Caparros gold sandals (P3,450)



Photography Cyrus Panganiban
Styling Bianca Consunji
Makeup Tatin Yang of Lancôme Philippines
Model Camille Cruz of Elan Models

JS BOUTIQUE purple jersey gown (P8,500); Ensembles necklace (P395); Caparros purple satin pumps (P3,450)

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2007

D



Jenni Epperson, for one, came up with tongue-in-cheek and colorful eco bags to discourage the use of plastic. A portion of the sales was earmarked for Bantay Kalikasan.

Celebrities like Ruffa Gutierrez with brothers Raymond and Richard, KC Concepcion with Tim Yap, and organizations like I Can Serve put up bazaars such as RRampa for a Cause, Artist's Fair and Tickled Pink, respectively, to benefit their advocacies.

The movement to promote all things Filipino was most apparent in 2007. Designers like Patrice Ramos-Diaz utilized indigenous materials like abaca and Piña from Palawan to make modern dresses. Randy Ortiz used Bulacan leather to develop a line of bags, belts and shoes.

The discriminating home-grown consumer is now more appreciative of locally designed and manufactured items. Or could it be that local designers are just delivering better quality pieces with cutting-edge designs that are worth one's hard-earned pesos?

This year was an exciting and productive year of contrasts in fashion. Never has the local scene seemed more interesting and promising. Next year will hopefully be even better, as Filipino design and ingenuity continue to take center stage.

It wasn't all frivolity and fluff. Personalities and organizations came up with various projects that promoted a particular cause.

E-mail the author at afashion@inquirer.com.ph

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MYTH
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MODEL of the moment
Mia Ayesa



CELEBRITY endorsers KC
Concepcion for Bayo (above) and
Anne Curtis (left) for Freeway

Conception was launched as the new face of Bayo while stylish Anne Curtis became Freeway's image model.

It wasn't all frivolity and fluff. Personalities and organizations came up with various projects that promoted a particular cause.

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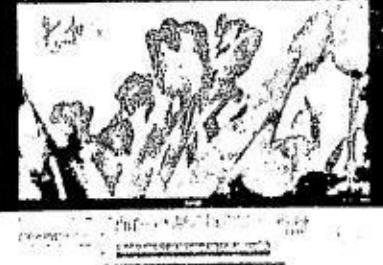
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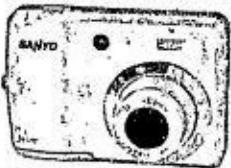
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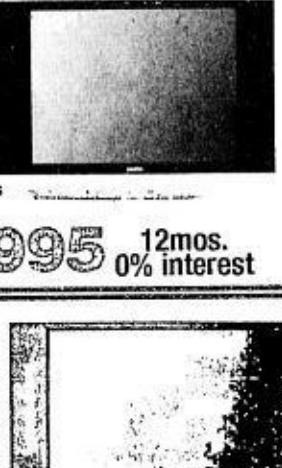
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0% interest



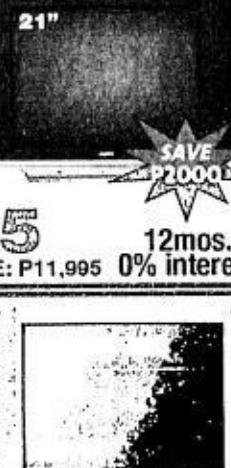
ST-21SE1V
• ECO Mode for Saving Energy
• DVD Component Input
• Full AV Stereo
• Twin Speakers
• Elegant Double Ender Design

FREE SANYO
wireless headphones
& TV Rack

P6,495 3mos.
0% interest

P5,995 3mos.
0% interest

BEFORE: P6,395 0% interest



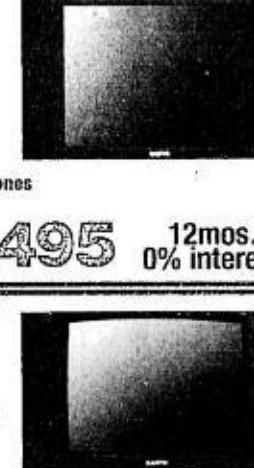
ST-14SE1V
• ECO Mode for Saving Energy
• AV Multi-system / Monaural
• Twin Speaker
• Elegant Double Ender Design

FREE SANYO
wireless headphones
& TV Rack

P4,495 3mos.
0% interest

P4,495 3mos.
0% interest

BEFORE: P5,195 0% interest



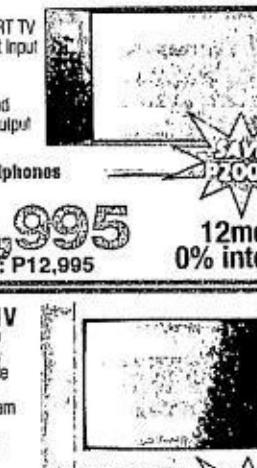
ST-14CE1V
• ECO Mode for Saving Energy
• Elegant Double Ender Design
• AV Multi-system / Monaural
• Twin Speaker

FREE SANYO
wireless headphones
& TV Rack

P4,295 3mos.
0% interest

P4,295 3mos.
0% interest

BEFORE: P4,495 0% interest



ST-21VF1 FLAT TV
• ECO Mode for Saving Energy
• DVD Component Input
• Elegant Double Ender Design
• Full AV Stereo Twin Speakers

FREE SANYO
wireless headphones
& TV Rack

P7,495 6mos. 0% interest

BEST BUY
ST-21VF1 FLAT TV
• ECO Mode for Saving Energy
• DVD Component Input
• Elegant Double Ender Design
• Full AV Stereo Twin Speakers

FREE SANYO wireless headphones
& TV Rack

P7,495 6mos. 0% interest

BEFORE: P6,395 0% interest

VPC-S70
• 7.1 Megapixel Still
• 10 MP Real-time Interpolation
• Digital Image Stabilizer
• 12x Zoom (3x optical, 4x digital)
• 2.5 TFT LCD
• Face Chaser
• 22MB Internal memory

FREE
521MB SD
2pcs AA eneloop
with charger

FREE
521MB SD
2pcs AA eneloop
with charger

VPC-E60
• 6.0 Megapixel Still
• 10 MP Real-time Interpolation
• Digital Image Stabilizer
• 12x Zoom (3x optical, 4x digital)
• 2.5 TFT LCD
• Touch Sensor Shutter Button
• 32MB Internal Memory

FREE
521MB SD
2pcs AA eneloop
with charger

P15,995 12mos. 0% interest

BEFORE: P14,995 0% interest

P22,995 12mos. 0% interest

BEFORE: P21,995 0% interest

P47,500 12mos. 0% interest

BEFORE: P46,500 0% interest

P20,495 12mos. 0% interest

BEFORE: P19,495 0% interest

P19,995 12mos. 0% interest

BEFORE: P18,995 0% interest

P33,409 12mos. 0% interest

BEFORE: P32,409 0% interest

P10,995 12mos. 0% interest

BEFORE: P10,095 0% interest

P10,095 12mos. 0% interest

BEFORE: P9,995 0% interest

P9,995 12mos. 0% interest

BEFORE: P9,895 0% interest

P9,895 12mos. 0% interest

BEFORE: P9,795 0% interest

P9,795 12mos. 0% interest

BEFORE: P9,695 0% interest

P9,695 12mos. 0% interest

BEFORE: P9,595 0% interest

P9,595 12mos. 0% interest

BEFORE: P9,495 0% interest

P9,495 12mos. 0% interest

BEFORE: P9,395 0% interest

P9,395 12mos. 0% interest

BEFORE: P9,295 0% interest

P9,295 12mos. 0% interest

BEFORE: P9,195 0% interest

P9,195 12mos. 0% interest

BEFORE: P9,095 0% interest

P9,095 12mos. 0% interest

BEFORE: P8,995 0% interest

P8,995 12mos. 0% interest

BEFORE: P8,895 0% interest

P8,895 12mos. 0% interest

BEFORE: P8,795 0% interest

P8,795 12mos. 0% interest

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IN THIS ISSUE
BEAUTY on F3

LIFESTYLE

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2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

LIFE-STYLED
Thelma Sioson San Juan

2007: The year of independent designers

OVER THE HOLIDAYS, FEASTING on the latest bestseller of my favorite author John Irving, "Until I Find You," I came across a line that, to me, was the lesson of 2007.

Irving writes, "Life was not a stage; life was improv... Yes, you needed to know your lines. But on some occasions, you also had to be able to make your lines up..."

Things don't always turn out the way you expected them to. So when your day takes incredible twists, you must digress from your habitual script and learn to improvise, if only to get through the day. 2007 was such a year—unbelievable changes.

I'll remember '07 as the year they tried to steal my lines, in a manner of speaking, and tried to appropriate them for themselves. While that made me miss a beat for a moment, it also taught me to be pliant, to improvise with other blessings life has given me. Ironically, it even opened other worlds.

If you're honest enough, the word authentic comes to mind—you can improvise creatively. People may try to take away from you, but if you know how to improvise, they can't diminish you.

A good friend, Margie David Collins, wrote me a short and sweet greeting—"Despite gravity's pull, you must move on, upwards and forward!"

Designers

Apart from life's intrinsic lessons, we'll remember '07 as the year of independent designers—from fashion designers setting up their own stores in the malls, to bags and shoes designers launching their own lines.

Fashion designers just kept at it, undeterred by the competition from established retail brands—Lulu Tan Gan, Cesar Gaupo, Randy Ortiz, Patrice Ramos Diaz, Ivarluski Aseron, Jolie Lloren, Rhett Eala, Inno Sotto (who will have a huge space at Rustan's for at least

three lines), Dennis Lustico, Arcy Gayatin, Frederick Peralta, among others.

Bags and accessories designers Wyn Wyn Ong, Amina Aranaz, Bea Valdez showed that high-end is the way to go, that there's a special niche for specially crafted bags and accessories.

Then there are free-standing specialty fashion stores peddling anything from vintage luxury bags to affordable limited-edition clothes and accessories. From the Rockwell shops to Ingrid Chua Go's store in Jupiter in Makati, '07 was the year of the fashion specialty stores. Their selling point? The taste and good eye as well as merchandising skills of their owners.

Chito Vijandre and Ricky Toledo of Firma paved the way for the specialty-store phenomenon. They are distinguished by their tasteful and exquisite selection of merchandise. The consumer goes by the taste of the store owner.

Gap has finally made its way to Manila. Its Glorietta store is a far cry from the made-over Gap in San Francisco, which is designed like a minimalist gallery, with giant-framed, black-and-white photos of Gap icons propped up against the glass windows or bare walls.

The Philippine store's white walls and gallery platforms, the black and white photos, the dark wood photo frames—the look is chic and classic Gap. No matter that Gap's space here is small, its classic merchandise should re-train women to mix and match, to accentuate the basic pieces with style-statement accessories.

Then there's talk that H&M isn't far behind, to be brought here by another retail giant.

In '07, Augie Cordero emerged from reclusion to stage a gala show. Inno Sotto tapped a new source of inspiration in Alhambra, Spain.

In '07, brands such as Sam sung sealed their commitment

to the development of lifestyle and design by funding it.

'07 saw the co-existence of big brands and independent designers and craftsmen, the big corporate vision with individual design endeavors.

What 2007 was for some friends:

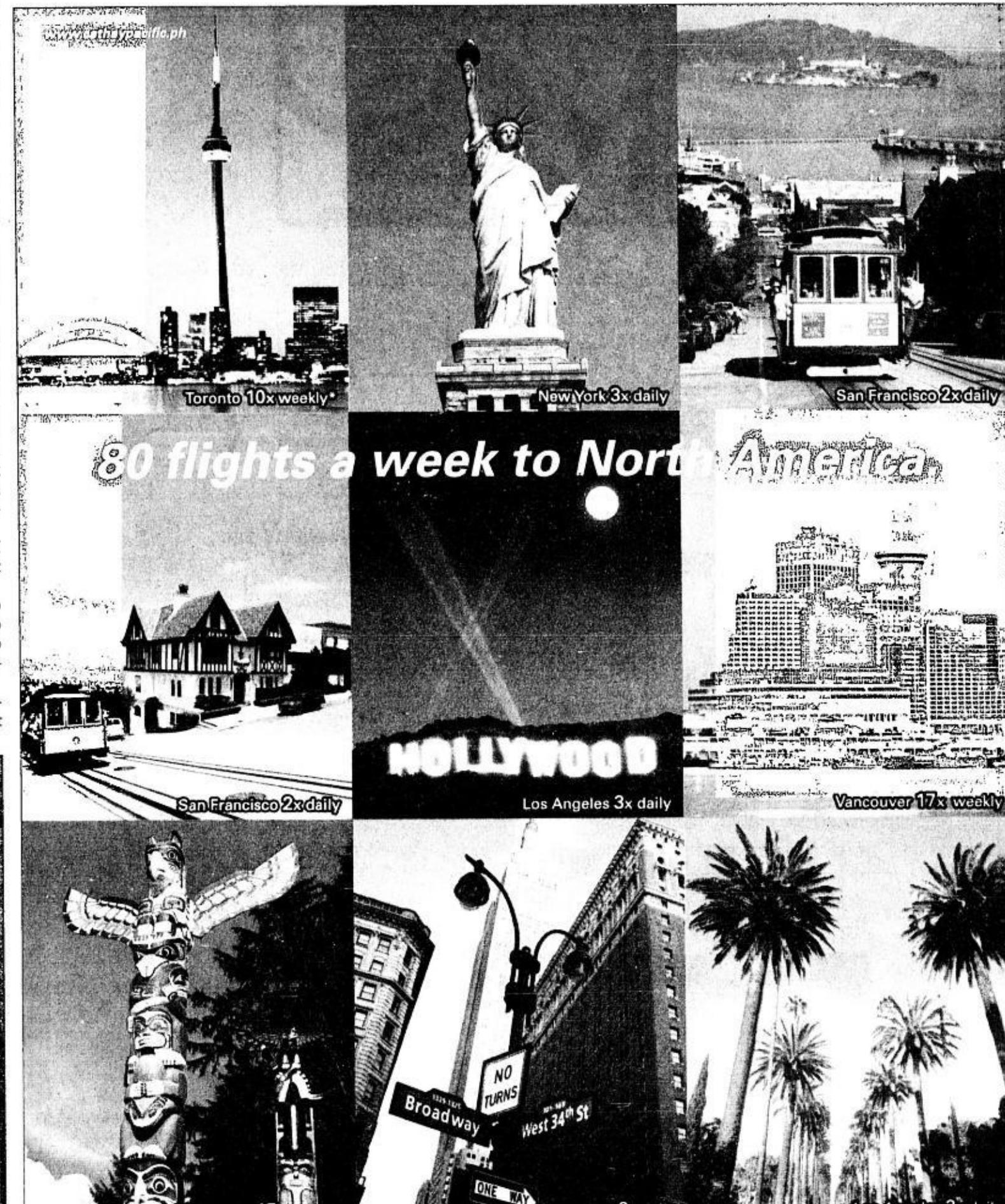
Enrico Santos: The theme of '07 seemed to be upheaval and uprooting, witnessing the incredible and trying to make sense of the unfathomable ... I adopted a child ... global warming, iPhone—anyone can add to the who-would-have-thought list. The forces of life made me lose myself, and my quest for self became a brand new adventure. I can't wait for 2008. It can



2007/E4

THE INDIES of Philippine fashion include (clockwise) Rhett Eala, Frederick Peralta, Wyn Wyn Ong and Amina Aranaz.

Fashion designers have set up their own mall shops and accessories designers carved a niche in the global market



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A diario novela by CARLO J. CAPARAS
To have and to hold
Art: ARNELA A. AVETRIA



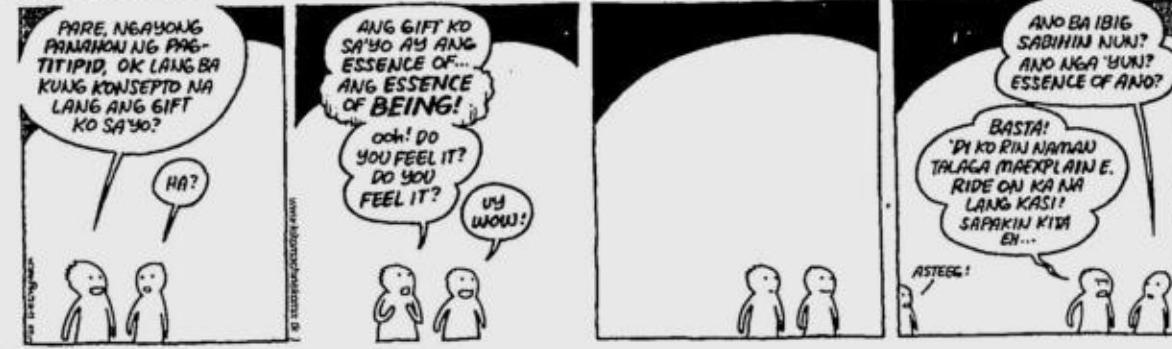
ATOMO AND WEBBOY

BY LYRA GARCCELLANO

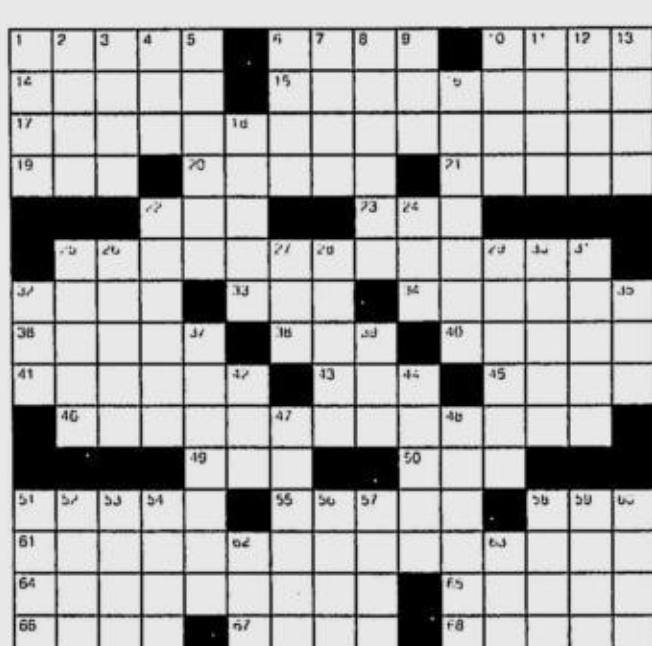


KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA



DAILY CROSSWORD

By John Underwood
New York, NY

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

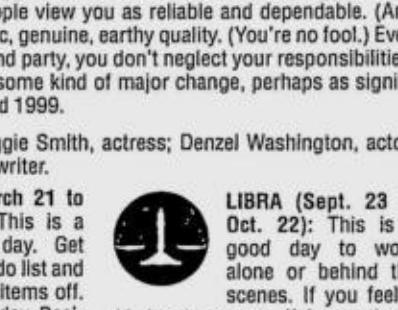


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44 To the point
47 Tell secrets
48 Philanthropists
51 Shortened wd.
52 Extra
53 Peeves
54 Insect pest
56 Wow, that was close!
49 Makes right
50 About, with dates
51 Messenger
52 Easy letters?
53 Plaines, IL
54 Dolt
55 Skater
56 Babilonia
57 Brain wave charts, for short
58 Catholic mass calendar
59 The slammer
60 Leg part
62 SE Asian war
63 Waller
64 Reuther's grp.

HOROSCOPE

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON



CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

8	2							7
7								
6								1
	1	9					2	
							3	
	4						8	3
							6	2
							3	5
2							7	

Difficulty Level ★★★★

12/28

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

7	4	3	8	5	1	6	9	2
2	6	8	4	9	3	5	1	7
1	5	9	7	2	6	3	8	4
6	8	7	1	4	5	2	3	9
3	9	2	6	8	7	4	5	1
4	1	5	9	3	2	8	7	6
9	7	4	5	6	8	1	2	3
5	2	6	3	1	9	7	4	8
8	3	1	2	7	4	9	6	5

Difficulty Level ***

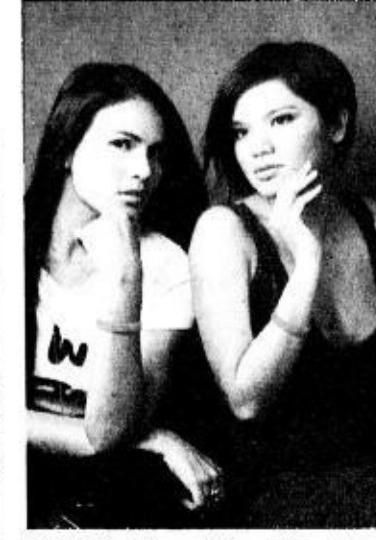
12/27



ANIELLE Santos with Ian King



MAURICE Arcache and Ivar Aseron



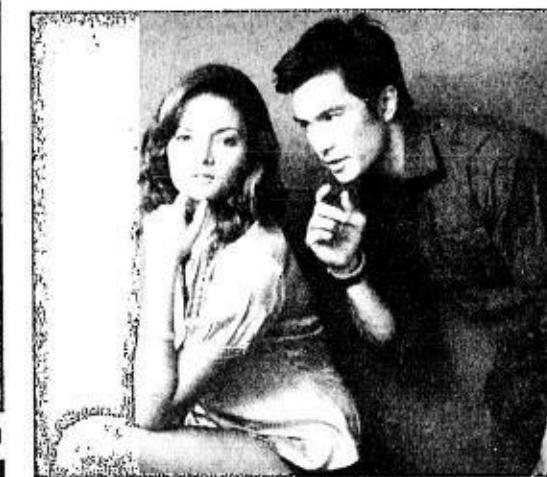
IZA Calzado and Tessa Dragon



GEORGIA and Armand del Rosario



BEAUTIFUL couple Archie and Lingling King



HELENA Belmonte and Diether Ocampo



CELINE Gabriel and Matt Lim



CHESCA Litton and GP Reyes



ABBA Napa and Ipe Cruz

Some fashionable causes and the rest



PRIME movers behind the Festival of Trees: PBSP Chairman Manny Pangilinan with Luisa Perez Rubio, former Ambassador Isabel Wilson and Joey Cusia



MGC ladies Linda Angeles, Marilou Laurena, Albertine Santi, Ruby Roa, Ging delos Reyes and Sonya Garcia



BABY Paterno with renowned artist Anita Magsaysay Ho and Mindy Perez Rubio



AMBASSADOR Albert del Rosario with US Ambassador Kristie Kelley



US Charge d'Affaires Paul Jones with Sonya Garcia and Catherine Jones

A FEW YEARS BACK, THE HIV Awareness Program came to fruition, *palanggas*. It was an idea by smart Ian Angelo King, founder and president of Victoria Court, who had been bitten by the social-responsibility bug. Knowing how many people take a dim view of establishments like Victoria Court, he saw an opportunity to create awareness and promote safe sex among his clients.

It began with a simple plan to give out free condoms. King then realized this alone was not going to regulate the incidence of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. So he took a step back and recognized that the root of the problem was a lack of education on the subject.

Having observed foreign awareness campaigns making use of celebrities, artists, and athletes as spokespersons, he adopted the same formula to help spread AIDS awareness in Manila.

Now, local anti-HIV advocates help Victoria Court with its ambitious campaign, which has gotten a positive response, *palanggas*.

Now, the campaign is raising funds for HIV-positive individuals. Check this out, *palanggas*, Stophiv.info produces merchandise such as T-shirts, bands, and dog tags, which are for sale. Part of the proceeds help fund prevention initiatives and assist Filipino HIV carriers in getting free and constant immunization shots to prevent the development of their HIV into AIDS.

The campaign also held a superb photo exhibit featuring the newest roster of HIV awareness advocates at the new Embassy Superclub.

And don't forget, dahlings, every year on Dec. 1, World AIDS Day, Victoria Court reminds us to "spread the love, and NOT the virus." And this year as well as the years to come is no different, *palanggas*.

Christmas fund-raiser

What a magical evening! Some 300 of Cosmo Manille's premier social, business and political hotshots attended the 12th annual Christmas fundraiser, Festival of Trees, of the Philippine Business for Social Progress and Makati Garden Club.

On auction were Christmas trees of all sizes, created by *tres* project.

WITHOUT BATTLING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen using Kodak EasyShare system

doué Maria Luisa Perez-Rubio, as well as art pieces donated by brilliant "artistes" Edgar Doctor, Joven Ignacio, Buenaventura and Trinidad.

Some 100 beautifully wrapped "mystery boxes," each with a spectacular mystery gift, were on sale, each for P5,000.

Among the guests were regal US Ambassador Kristie Kenney, who headed the long list of namedropables from the diplomatic corps, *palanggas*.

Traffic-stopper Tessa Prieto Valdes showed up, looking wow in a *tres fantastique* Christmas tree outfit. He was with Carlo Orosa, *palanggas*.

The Festival of Trees, dahlings, raises funds annually to help the poorest and most desolate regions in the country, such as those provinces in the Bicol region hardest hit by recent typhoons.

The caring women of substance behind the fantastic fund-raiser were led by Señora Perez-Rubio. Others were Ging de los Reyes, Belen King, Ruby Roa, Ching Caluag, Albertine Santi, Mindy Perez-Rubio, Marilou Laurena, and Baby Paterno.

Thanks to all supporters, this awesome event raised millions of pesos.

Top of the night

It was a fantastic combination of speed and style, dahlings, when BMW hosted the 3rd Annual 24/7 Nocturnal Awards, an event first initiated by 24/7 Magazine. The event toasted "the best of the nightlife."

If you are not in the know, *palanggas*, 24/7 Magazine is a free monthly magazine available in several establishments, which serves as a guide to the finest restaurants, bars and events in Cosmo Manille.

The publication aims to feature the best nightspots, leading it to organize the Nocturnal Awards, which reflect their "readers' favorites."

Awards included Best DJ, Best Stage Event, Best Artist or Live Act, Best Restaurant, Best Music Event, Best 24/7 Cover, and Lifetime Achievement Award.

"This constant search for excellence and style became a factor for the collaboration between BMW and 24/7 Magazine, thereby leading to the production of the 3rd Annual Nocturnal Awards," explained young hotshot, BMW's corporate communication gal Leana Farrales, no less.

The happening was held in the eye-catching BMW Pavilion—an awesome 800-sq m, fully air-conditioned and luxuriously furnished tent, which was built specifically for the event.

After all was said and done, it was time to party, and party we did with BMW and 24/7, dahlings.

Erratum. In last Tuesday's column, Nene and Jun Leonor were incorrectly identified as Andy and Teresita Liboro. We regret the error, *palanggas*.



LITO German and Mike O'Connor



FRANCIS Lumen with Maricar Lim and Nick Tuason



ITO and Tippi Ocampo with John Lacson



CLIFFORD Chung with Regi Dela Cruz and Edwin Cruz



ERRATUM
The caption for this photo published in last Tuesday's column should have read "Jun and Nene Leonor, Louie Ablaza, Mabel Abaño, and Tereret and Andy Liboro."

Fashion ideas for New Year



ON HER: Paisley print dress and bejeweled bangle
On him: Striped polo
On her: Orange shirt dress and long moss green necklace



ON HIM: White sweater vest, gray long-sleeve polo and gray slacks
On her: Sheer black dress over white dress and black long necklace
On her: Black and silver polka dotted dress and silver bangles

ROBINSONS DEPARTMENT STORE (RDS) gives you a sneak peek on 2008's hottest color choices so you can start the New Year with a big fashion bang.

Purple. Robust shades of purple will create a rich combination especially when matched with pastel lavenders or ethereal near-neutrals. So don your purple spaghetti strapped dress. For men, a purple and black striped print polo and pinstriped pants is a good ensemble. A purple shirt dress with gold prints, meanwhile, shows allure and seduction.

Green. Green is the symbol of prosperity, fertility, freshness and unspoiled beauty. So take the lead in the fashion landscape by wearing a green haltered dress that reflects a cool and natural feel. Florals and foliage with an art nouveau look are hot. Green, when accented with sunny yellows, berry reds, mint, grass green or other natural shades (like a khaki long-sleeved polo over a green checkered polo shirt and denim pants) is a sure winner.

Brown and beige. From camel, leather to rust, walnut and pumpkin, shades of brown and beige will provide a chic, comfortable mood. Big this coming year are the colors of stone and earth coordinated with softer, more luxurious tones such as sky blues or sea greens. Khaki pants and brown polo will dominate the guys' scene. Muted home-y hues such as beige will also be big on girls. A cream dress with rosette design, paired with earthly browns and basic green bangles, will make a sophisticated urban look.

Rust and orange. These two hues help create a fusion of warm and cool colors, neutral shades and "brights," and various textures and sheens, including terra cotta and cinnamon. Wear your paisley print dress and top it off with pearlescent acces-

ON HER:
Cream dress with rosette design, bejeweled and brown plastic bangles



sories. A rust brown striped polo for guys or an orange shirt dress matched with a long moss green necklace for women will be a great pick for your first party of the year.

Black, gray and white. Reminiscent of the cinema of the forties yet done with a contemporary flair, being in black, white or gray inspires a certain elegance. It can also be cool, sleek and contemporary. A white sweater vest, gray long-sleeved polo and gray slacks are classic examples. A sheer black dress over white dress, accented with a long bejeweled bead necklace, will suggest couture allure or a soft inviting look. Return to elegant dressing with a black and silver polka dotted dress and silver gray, ash or ivory bangles and create a dramatic interplay of light and dark.

ON HER: Purple spaghetti-strap printed dress and long necklace
On him: Purple and black striped print polo and pinstriped pants
On her: Purple shirt dress with gold design

2007, year . . .

From page E1

only get more surreal. (Oh my, I sound like Cory Quirino possessed by Jaime Licauco.)

Lulu Tan Gan: Very tough year. I felt being pushed off my pedestal. Try to solve it patiently like untangling a multiple knot. The good side—I also met many kind, helpful friends.

Abe Florendo: 2007, silly old fool that I am, hung up on Chinese numerology, has my personal lucky number 7 and the sum of 9, which misses by one digit the lucky number 8 in Chinese divination. That one-digit miss made the difference between the lucky and the near-lucky in my life in 2007. What the heck, near-lucky is good enough for me.

God, or the universe, is famously stingy when it comes to doing (or is that dealing?) out luck or blessings. So what do I remember best of 2007? I seriously considered getting married, yikes. Good thing, I woke up one morning and while brushing my teeth I realized that marriage would be a worse tragedy than dying. Two, I almost died. Two years ago I smashed my kneecap when the

car I was riding in veered off the road and hit a huge, impassive tree. In 2007 I broke two back ribs when I slipped on a rain-slick lane in Baguio. So I thought that was the end of porotic me. Three, I survived 2007, whole and sane and full of humor, and finished my eighth book. A miracle, considering that young soldiers, for the craziest of reasons, were dying in Iraq.

Lia Bernardo: '07 was a year of spiritual, professional and personal growth, a lot of changes and new experiences. Some were easy, most were difficult but it really led to growth. I'm so grateful that everything just seemed to fall in place, especially my personal life.

Louie Cruz: The greatest pleasure I had in '07 was Asian Dragon magazine, as my brainchild. I traveled to another country and discovered a new exciting world without having left the Philippines.

Henri Calayag: It's been a good and blessed year. I have no complaint. I'm so thankful that I had spent little time with "mother" Ernest (Santiago).

OVERTIME ON THE DANCE FLOOR

SAN MIG LIGHT PRESENTS

DAYBREAK

THE LONGEST EVER DANCE PARTY IN MANILA



MAHABA-HALANG HARI... MAHABA-HALANG HARI!
FEATURING UK'S LEGENDARY HOUSE DJ PETE HELLER

DECEMBER 28, 2007 FROM 10PM UNTIL 6AM

PARTY FROM 9PM TO 6AM TO GET A CHANCE TO WIN COOL PRIZES SUCH AS NEW KIA PICANTO, APPLE MACBOOK,

SAMSUNG MOBILE PHONES AND K3 MP3 PLAYERS, NOKIA WAPPHONES, AND SEA AIR TRAVEL VOUCHERS TO ANY DESTINATION IN THE PHILIPPINES.

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DEPOT ROOFTOP, THE FORT

DRINK MODERATELY

18



NICOLE Scherzinger at the Bench Body photo shoot at the Quixote Studio in Sta. Monica, Los Angeles

LIFESTYLE

Purrfect Nicole

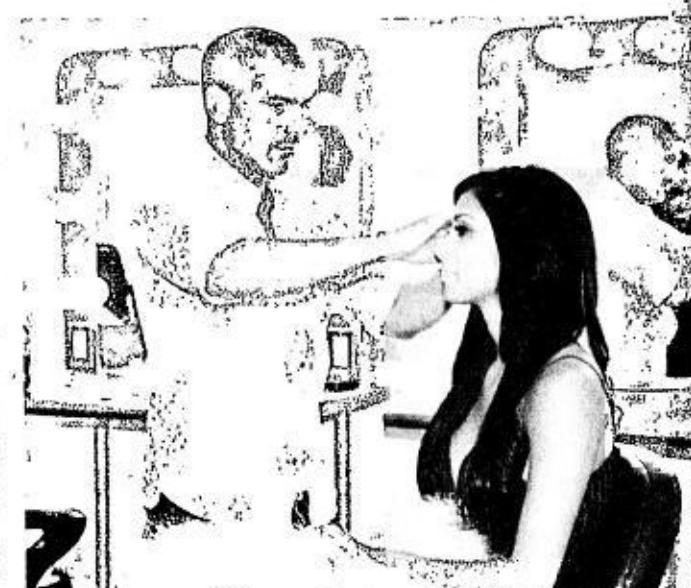
Like a true Bench Body icon, Pussycat Doll Nicole Scherzinger shows the world that she can fly solo

EVER FEEL THE need to express yourself freely and show the many sides of your vibrant personality?

Bench Body's latest collection allows you to do exactly that.

And who better to represent Bench Body but a woman who exemplifies a "dynamic nature." Pussycat Doll Nicole Scherzinger joins Bench's list of well-known personalities who have graced its many campaigns. Known worldwide as the lead singer of the

PURRFECT/F4



GETTING prepped and dolled up

Paolo Abrera's Balancing Act

Slow Down

In the fast-paced world we live in today, we tend to forget to slow down and enjoy the fun things in life. Stress and pressure, more often than not, make us feel tired and weary, therefore hindering wellness for our body and soul..

What we need to have is a balanced lifestyle, a philosophy espoused by the Coca-Cola Company. It is a balancing act that deals with getting the right amount of physical activity, the right kind of food to eat and enough time to experience happiness.

Savor Life

The Coca-Cola Company endeavors to fulfill this by offering a wide array of softdrinks that completes a balanced lifestyle. In every bottle of our favorite softdrinks, is an experience of happiness that refreshes our body and soul.

Sportscaster and athlete, Paolo Abrera shares the same philosophy. He defines balanced lifestyle as "a lifestyle where you combine duties and priorities, to maximize your experience and get the most out of life." He achieves this by being effective at multi-tasking, or in his words "hitting many birds with a few stones".

He is able to balance priorities namely work, family and his active lifestyle through simple routines: riding his bike to work, holding cycling classes as a part-time job and spending "quality swim-time" with his children.

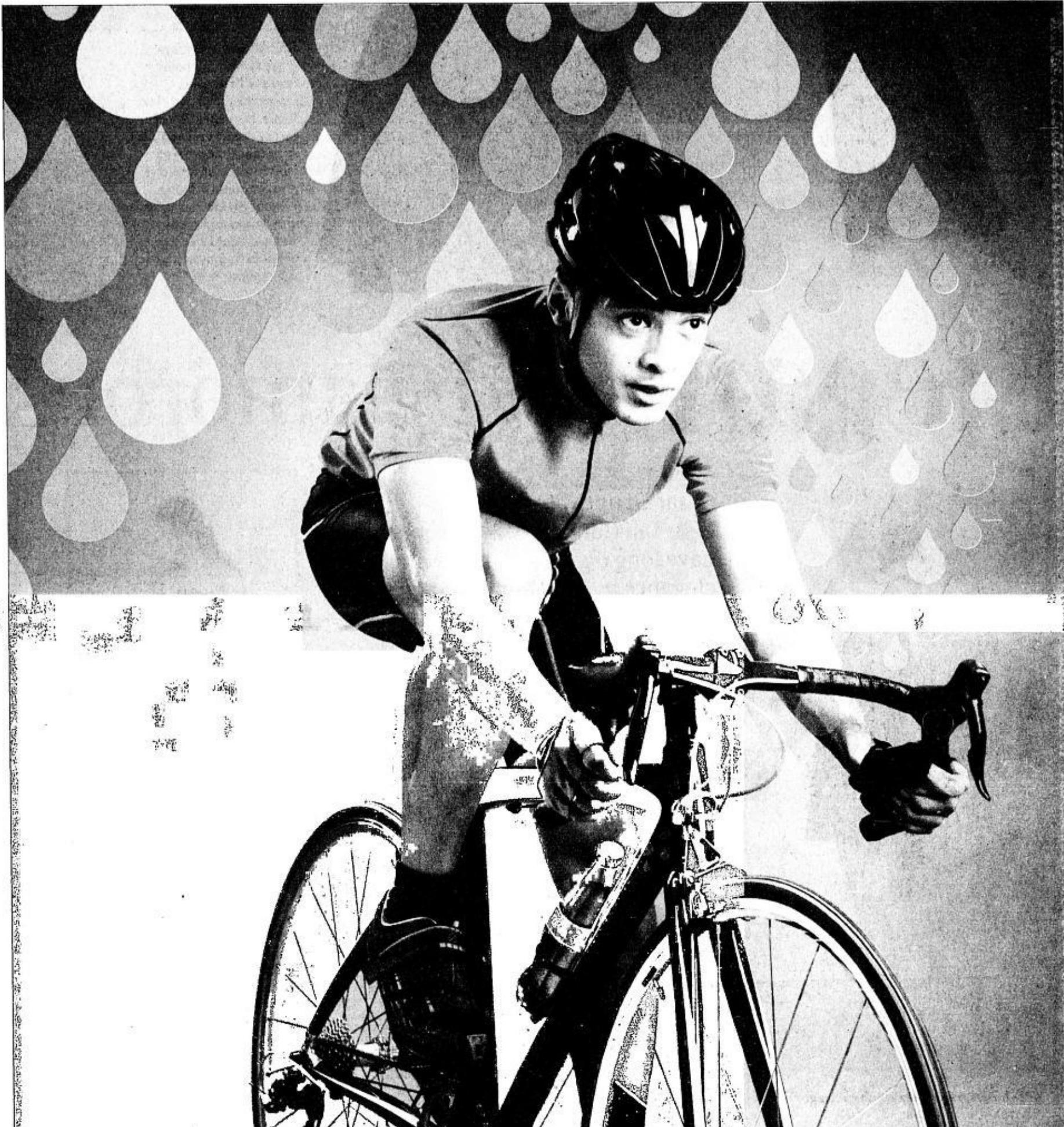
Happier State of Mind

The Coca-Cola Company encourages everyone to get the most out of life by maintaining a balanced lifestyle. Have a balanced diet everyday, engage in a lot of physical activity and get enough rest.

Develop a clearer perspective on how to manage life's priorities and needs and have a happier state of mind. Do what you need to do and cherish every refreshing bottle of your favorite softdrink.

The Coca-Cola Company
bawat patak, mahalaga

www.bawatpatalmahanaga.com.ph



66 GET EVERYTHING YOU WANT OUT OF YOUR LIFE.

My happiness comes from living a balanced life.
As a sportscaster and athlete,
I balance everything everyday!
I maintain a balanced diet,
get a lot of physical activity, enough rest,
and drink what makes me happy! ☺ ☺

Paolo Abrera
Sportscaster and Athlete

A balanced life is a Sparkling Life.



The Coca-Cola Company
bawat patak, mahalaga

www.bawatpatalmahanaga.com.ph

"Bawat Patak, Mahalaga" and logo, "The Droplet Design", "Coca-Cola", "Coke", the Design

Br

Sars

"Sparkle" are trademarks of The Coca-Cola Company © 2000

EFREN OCAMPO gives new elegance to the iconic little black dress with draping and ostrich feathers. Fashioned mostly from chiffon materials, the dress gently cascades down the body, giving it a "simple yet elegant look." This is one LBD that will stand out in any holiday party.



CESAR GAUPO stays close to his minimalist roots with simple, undercluttered and clean looks. His collection of jersey dresses is filled with surprises that emerge from cocoon silhouettes and dramatic draping. "I want my clothes to be very feminine," said Gaupo. "But I also like them to be playful and very wearable."

Elegant and glamorous staples



LULU TAN GAN'S knits enter the gilded age with touches of gold and bronze in glitzy separates. But the knit queen remains simple and practical. "Elegance should not be loud," she said, adding that "halter tops, tunics, shrugs, wraps, and pants are easy to mix and match."

THE COLLECTIONS OF CESAR GAUPO, EFREN OCAMPO, LULU TAN GAN AND MIKE DE LA ROSA ARE AVAILABLE AT THE LADIES WEAR BOUTIQUE DEPARTMENT OF SELECTED SM STORES.



MIKE DE LA ROSA takes the vintage route with rich velvet and rustling taffeta outfits as well as A-line and trapeze dresses that capture the charm of the '60s. These make for dramatic entrances anywhere, anytime.

GOINGS ON

Two reunions

The Andres Metilla-Modesta Suralta clan will have a grand reunion on Dec. 31 at the ancestral home of the Metilla clan on Lily Street, Bansalan, Davao del Sur. The clan that includes members from Germany, Switzerland and Australia will have a tree-planting activity on Andres Metilla Road, named after Bansalan's first barrio lieutenant who established the first primary school, Catholic church and wet market. Ikebana professor Serapion S. Metilla (tel. 0917-8321352) will conduct a seminar on plant arts. Meanwhile, the Association of Bansalenos Worldwide headed by Netherlands-based Leila Noel

Rispens held a reunion to help promote Bansalan as a tourist destination. With the support of Mayor Edwin Reyes, it aims to help indigent children through a literacy program.

PROMO. Renaissance Makati City Hotel, Manila bids farewell to its Coffee Shop with "Prices of '94," a three-day promo, Dec. 28-30. The promo includes breakfast, lunch and dinner buffets; à la carte menu selections; and beverages. The Coffee Shop will close its doors and will transform into an all-day dining restaurant. The grand opening for the restaurant and the new lobby lounge is slated for the second quarter of 2008. Call 8116888.

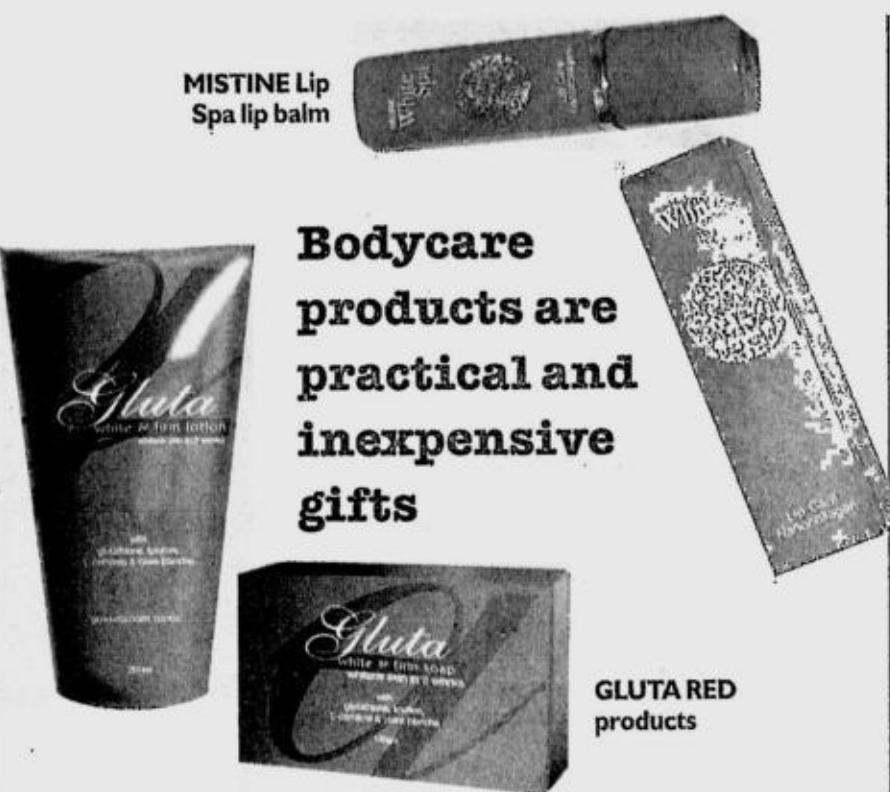


FIFA PRESIDENT IN MANILA

Joseph Blatter (center), president of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (Fifa), was recently welcomed in Manila by Sofitel Philippine Plaza general manager Bernd Schneider (left) and Philippine Football Federation (PFF) president Jose Mari Martinez. Blatter was in the Philippines as part of the centennial celebration of the federation. Sofitel Philippine Plaza was the official residence of the Fifa delegation. Blatter also visited Tuloy sa Don Bosco Children's Village where PFF organized a special youth tournament for street children.

BEAUTY

MISTINE Lip Spa lip balm



Bodycare products are practical and inexpensive gifts

GLUTA RED products

Clutter-free New Year's gifts

CHRISTMAS JUST SEEMS to have whizzed by, but many of us still have friends and relatives whom we will be seeing before New Year but whom we have not given presents to.

Hardly anybody has bottomless pockets so my advice to you is to give something practical and consumable as most people now live in condominiums or compact spaces with the now "in" Zen look that does not leave room for clutter.

My shopping places of choice? Drugstores and grocery aisles or places which sell bath and body products.

Treating body breakouts

Because the weather abruptly changes from warm to cold, and because of warm sweaters and unhealthy diets, we tend to have breakouts on the back and shoulders. The specific reason is dry dead skin on the surface blocking the pore opening. Options:

Body scrub—If applied with dry hands on dry skin and scrubbed on for a minimum of 10 seconds per area, it will check the pore blockers and wash these down the drain.

Follow with a shower gel to get that smooth, silky texture afterward. Those who prefer soap should rinse off all the grains, then scrub up with soap afterward so the bits don't get stuck on your soap bar.

Meanwhile, the acne-prone should apply lotion or body butter on arms, thighs and legs but avoid the shoulders and back. Go by scent variant or one that addresses your concern like whitening, firming or anti-aging.

Anti-dandruff hair conditioner—In the war of anti-dandruff products, both Head & Shoulders and Clear are very good. Those who have oily, acne-prone skin should switch to either of these as they have zinc and other active ingredients that actually treat and prevent acne. Just pick the scent and variant you want. I go for the one with menthol as I like the cold feel.

Cellulite—The battle is never-ending and most women would really appreciate a lifetime supply of anti-cellulite products, because we all know that once we stop using them, the unwanted "dimples" start creeping back. Among the drugstore brands, I have to say Nivea Goodbye Cellulite (P499) delivers. Team with Glutawhite and firm lotion (P289), and we have got a winning combination as both contain L-Carnitine that burns stored/trapped fat.

Hand wash—Always having guests in the house, I realized a bar of soap on the sink would start to look gross after some time.

MAKEOVER

911

Kinny Salas



Watson's has super prices and a new, very concentrated hand-wash soap that smells great. Prices range from P80 to P200. The ones in my house: Watson's Wish in Citrus Melon, a very refreshing scent; and Sugar Babe, which smells comforting and creamy!

Also try Island Life whitening wash liquid soap in rice bran oil.

Lip balm—Kiehl's Lip balm with or without tint and Smith's Rosebud Salve are still the top favorites for seriously chapped and flaking lips. These penetrate the flaky dry top layer and really hydrate, plump and soothe like a drink of water on arid land. Continued use improves lips' condition even on days you forget to use the product. Kiehl's is available at Greenbelt 5 while Smith's Rosebud Salve is at any Iora branch.

Oral whitening—Closet whitening fanatics who visit my house always hint they want these for Christmas. They ask me if I can serve them "the whitening water aka Gluta Snow" or have extra tablets I can spare them.

The cheapest ones I found and tried with the right dosage of Glutathione, Alpha lipoic acid and Vitamin C are Snow caps at Watson's and Glowthione by Godiva available at any Godiva skin station branch. Both cost P1,500 for 30 capsules.

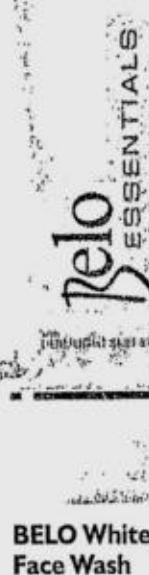
Let me know if you know of others that work and are reasonably priced.

Nothing is faster than the actual Glutathione injections straight to the vein which I get whenever I can from Belo clinic, Godiva Skin station and, occasionally, Blooming clinic at Timog. Results show after three sessions of double-dose twice a week.

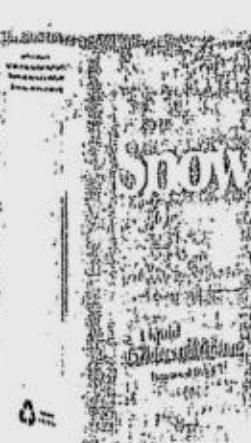
But they are expensive and do hurt no matter what people say. It just depends on your tolerance for pain and how vain you are. Belo's is fastest (results after three-dose sessions at P5,000 per single-dose session). But it is also the most painful due to the added active secret ingredient which goes on thick.

Godiva, though, may still be having its promo at P5,000 for three sessions so feel free to check it out. Single-dose sessions range from P3,500 to P10,000, depending on the establishment.

E-mail the author at kinnysalas@yahoo.com



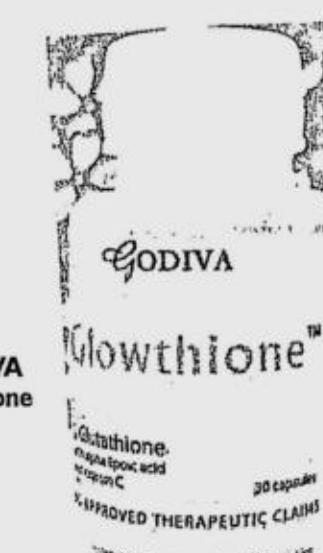
BELO Whitening Face Wash



GLUTA Snow Skin whitening detoxifying water



WATSON'S hand wash: Wish in Wild Strawberry and Play Sugar Babe



GODIVA Glowthione

Glutathione
Alpha lipoic acid
Vitamin C
APPROVED THERAPEUTIC CLAIMS
30 CAPSULES

New Year, new look



Before the year ends, check which products on your dresser should be thrown out

WHILE I love Christmas, I think we should all have a break after the festivities. Hopping from one Christmas party to another can be fun but very taxing.

At first I was contemplating about writing a "New Year, new you" story for this space, but the longer I thought about it, the less appealing it became.

I know we all need some sort of improvement, and, no, I don't mean anything major like a nose job, though if that's what you want for the New Year I have no objections. If that's what you think will make you happy, go for it! Just make sure you've done your research and your doctor is reputable.

Wait, I'm getting sidetracked...

There are certain things that I think should be done before the year ends. Like checking which products on your dresser should be thrown out. Yes, even products need



Ria Francisco-Prieto

a break, and believe me, your skin needs a break from them, too. So be ready to kiss your fav lippie goodbye. You can always buy the same shade!

Not all beauty products have expiration dates written on their packaging, but if they begin to smell and feel pasty, or have begun to discolor, ditch them pronto.

The shelf life of any cosmetic used around the eye area is more limited, because repeated microbial exposure during its use runs the risk of eye infection. Adding water or, worse, saliva to moisten it will only invite bacteria.

For that matter, all

natural products have the shortest shelf life, so take note of your beauty loot.

Check to see if boxes have expiration dates printed on them. Store products in room temperature and make sure not to expose them to direct sunlight. And for hygienic purposes, avoid sharing products.

Some more tips:
MASCARA. Can it after 3-6 months. The pumping motion pushes air in that can also bring in bacteria and possible eye infections.

EYELINER. Can it after 6 months. Bacteria can grow around the tip even if you sharpen it weekly. When the pencil starts to crumble as you

sharpen it, bacteria is present for sure.

FOUNDATION. Can it after 6 months, though water-based formulas last longer than oil-based ones. Make sure the sponge is clean and changed as often as possible.

EYE SHADOW. Can it after 9-12 months. Eye shadow is not supposed to cake, so if this happens, you know it is time to throw it away.

BLUSH. Can it after 1-2 years. No use saving those crumbs since they won't blend evenly anyway. Throw away when it starts to crack.

LIP COLOR. Can it after 2 years. Smell it. If it smells weird, it belongs in the trash can.



SPORTS HERITAGE INSPIRES LACOSTE WATCH COLLECTION

The relaxed elegance for which LACOSTE has become known finds fresh expression in a new collection of watches inspired by the sports heritage of the brand—especially its authentic tennis, golf and yachting roots. "My idea was to design more original, singular creations, not so traditional but more design-oriented and yet perpetuating a true watch-making value," says Christophe Pillet, French interior and product designer who also serves as creative consultant for LACOSTE watches.

ADVANTAGE represents the sporting attitude toward life of the LACOSTE brand. It is a superbly designed timepiece featuring a unique mix of classic and contemporary as well as hard and soft materials. The watch has a black rubber bezel, a polished stainless steel case and a perforated rubber strap with debossed LACOSTE logo. Water resistant to 5 atm/50 meters/165 feet.

MATCH POINT is an iconic men's sports watch that can make the cut from the club room to the boardroom. Its case is stainless steel with four-screw attachments at the lugs. The bezel features an etched LACOSTE logo under a curved mineral crystal, while the black dial has a sweep subsecond hand. The watch has a two-hand subsecond movement and a PVD coated crown with steel crocodile logo and black enamel fill. It is water resistant to 5 atm/50 meters/165 feet. The sporty black perforated rubber strap is on a deployment buckle with safety catch.

AVAILABLE AT L TIMESTUDIO, CHRONOS, LUCERNE AND SELECTED LACOSTE SPECIALTY BOUTIQUES.

Purrfect Nicole



From page F1

all-female band famed for such hits as "Don't Cha," "Buttons" and "Stickwitu," she's also about to launch her own album. Like a true Bench Body icon, Nicole is set to show the world that she can also fly solo.

Gifted with a gorgeous face and a beautiful voice, Nicole also stands out because of her outstanding dance moves.

Her beauty is in full display in Bench Body's latest campaign. Shot at the Quixote Studio south of Sta. Monica, Los Angeles, the photos show another side of Nicole. Clad in a stylish and good-fitting V-neck strap tee and low-rise bikini, she looks simple, soft, and sweet but feisty and confident.

Nicole, who is of Filipino descent (with a Filipino father and a Hawaiian-Russian mother), is a true professional and a delight to work with. During the shoot, she was prompt, open and very pleasant, not at all demanding. She moves with such ease, making it so easy for the Bench team to direct her.

Bench Body outlets are located in Glorietta, SM Megamall, SM Manila, Alabang Town Center, Robinsons Ermita, SM Sucat, SM Fairview, SM Pampanga, SM Lucena, SM Dasmarinas Cavite, SM Centerpoint, Robinsons Galleria, SM Baguio and SM North Edsa.

NICOLE Scherzinger dons a stylish and well-fit blue V-neck strap tee and low-rise bikini, both by Bench Body.

Make This Christmas Extra Special for Lolo and Lola

Grandparents are extra generous towards their children and grandchildren especially during the holidays. However, they are often taken for granted in considering as receivers of Christmas presents as families cannot figure out what to give. Mind you, old age is a golden period of their lives when they would love to be surrounded with their family and enjoy their attention. This Christmas, buy something really meaningful and useful for your grandfather and grandmother such as instruments for keeping a watch on their blood pressure and blood sugar level. Avid book readers always love to own a new good book or novel or have an annual subscription of some really good magazine may also be made as Christmas gifts. Or if baking interests you, cake, pastries or cookies especially made to suit their sugar limitations may be a good present. A new set of clothes that can be used when walking in the malls or parks may also brighten up lolo and lola's Christmas. It really all depends on how much you know your grandparents and their interests. But if you want something that would be most useful, our grandparents may also need a good companion such as dependable adult diapers like Dr. P, because it is important that this holiday, bonding time with the family is uninterrupted.

Dr. P not only guarantees quality time experience, but promises maximum secured feeling. This is because Dr. P has variants designed to fit



every need. Every diaper comes with super absorbent pad, high speed channels and anti-bacteria action giving maximum protection for a worry free time with the family. For light incontinence, there's Dr. P Basic that has adjustable tapes for easy fastening to follow contour of the waist. For heavy incontinence, there's Dr. P Day-Use that has an additional leak guard feature to prevent side spills. For extra heavy incontinence and overnight use, there's Dr. P Maxi Overnight that has a soft waist band for back leak protection. All these in very affordable prices from the no. 1 adult diaper! Dr. P is available in leading supermarkets and drugstores nationwide.

New Charmee Go Girl Pantyliners!

Comfort and protection is of utmost importance to young and active ladies especially when they are engaged to a lot of activities daily like school, organizations, sports and gimmicks. It is essential that they are given the right feminine protection like what Charmee provides. Introducing Charmee Go Girl Pantyliner! This new variant from the Charmee Pantyliner family will surely be



a hit to young active girls. Its unscented pad has comfortable cottony soft cover for gentle protection and all-day fresh feeling. Its strong adhesives keep the pantyliner in place to ensure hassle-free movements no matter how strenuous their activities are. Plus its very budget friendly! Now activities may be enjoyed well without the worries of discomfort with Charmee Go Girl pantyliners!

All-Night Protection with Charmee All-Night Plus!

Getting the right amount of sleep is vital, but equally important is the quality of sleep. Heart problems, weight issues and stress have all been associated with inadequate and/or irregular sleeping habits. Many women get too little sleep as a result of busy, stressful lives. Fortunately, there are a number of approaches women can use to improve their sleep, including regular exercise, establishing regular bed and wake times, improving the sleep environment, and getting the right feminine pads at the time of menstrual cycle. Just like what the new Charmee All-Night Plus can offer. The overnight feminine pad recently launched by Charmee has essential features for comfort and protection to make quality sleep easier to achieve. It has Soft Cotton Cover for gentle protection and Breathable Backsheet for comfort. This new

overnight pad will keep you protected with its Wetness Protection System that makes the pad absorbs from the center locking in the wetness giving a dry feeling and also has an All-Around Flow guard to prevent side leaks. Plus, its extra long pad that measures 325 mm in length, even longer than other overnight pads and Key-hole shape provide more support to prevent back leaks. With all these features, Charmee All-Night Plus assures superior all-night protection for the kind of quality sleep every woman needs at a very pocket friendly price!



PINK SALON BY BARBIE OFFERS SALON SERVICES SUCH AS DIVA AND PRINCESS HAIRSTYLES, GLITTER TATTOO, TEMPORARY HAIR COLOR, NAIL ART, GLAMOUR CURLS, BARBIE HAIRCUT AND BARBIE FOOT SPA.

Salon for real dolls

PINK SALON BY BARBIE RECENTLY opened at Funranch Mall in Frontera Verde, Pasig City. Pink Salon is the first licensed Barbie salon in the Philippines and in the world. It is located inside Toy Barn, a toy-store company at the Fun Ranch Mall in Frontera Verde in Pasig City.

The Toy Barn is owned and operated by Toy Barn Inc., the Filipino company granted with the first Barbie salon franchise in the world. Toy Barn Inc. owns and operates Pink Salon by Barbie.

Pink Salon by Barbie offers the complete services of a salon—pampering young misses as young as 3 years old and above. It can also be a great bonding place for moms and young girls as some services can be done to their mommies as well. Services include diva hairstyle, glitter tattoo, temporary hair color, nail art, glamour curls, Barbie haircut for moms and kids, and Barbie foot spa—all at affordable prices.

"We strictly follow the guidelines given to us by Mattel so our clients can be assured that what we have are premium services," said Mozzy Ravena.

The salon can accommodate a maximum of 16 girls at a time so it's also an ideal place to spend quality time with girl friends. The salon offers party packages such as Barbie's Fab Day Out, Barbie's Beauty Cuties, Barbie's Pamper Me, Barbie's Holiday Fun, and Barbie's Everything Girl.

The salon uses Barbie products for the services that are also available for sale. The latest Barbie dolls and other products are also for sale.

The salon is at the upper ground level of Funranch Mall in Frontera Verde, Pasig City. Toy Barn and Pink Salon by Barbie are open every day including holidays from 12 noon-9 p.m. (weekdays) and 10 a.m.-10 p.m. (weekends and holidays). For party reservations, call 6361320.



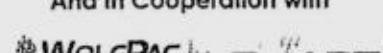
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The organizer reserves the right to amend programmes as deemed necessary without prior notice.

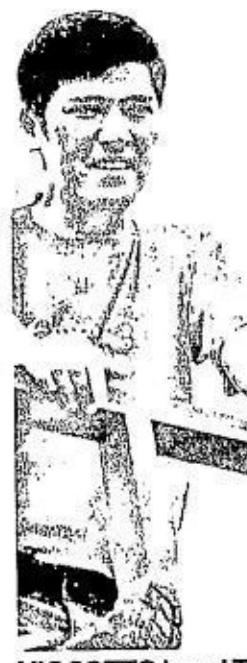
Per DTI NCR Series No. 4385 of 2007. Promo period: Dec. 2, 2007 to Jan. 7, 2008.

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

2207 (Globe) and 283 (Smart) or email us at entertainment@inquirer.com.phSMS feedback: inquirer.net/entertainment

CHRISTOPHER de Leon in SWAT gear, "Banal"

MARIAN Rivera, star of "Desperadas" float
PHOTOS BY RUDY ESPERAS

VIC SOTTO in red T-shirt, "Enteng Kabisote 4"



BONG REVILLA as warrior, "Resiklo"

■ Meeting 'the Pope' and Enteng at the festival parade /G5

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■ Our most fascinating interviews of 2007 Only In Hollywood /G2

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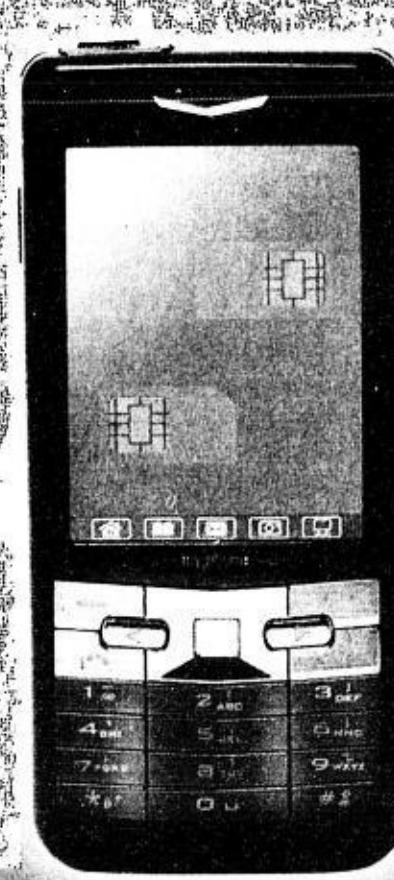
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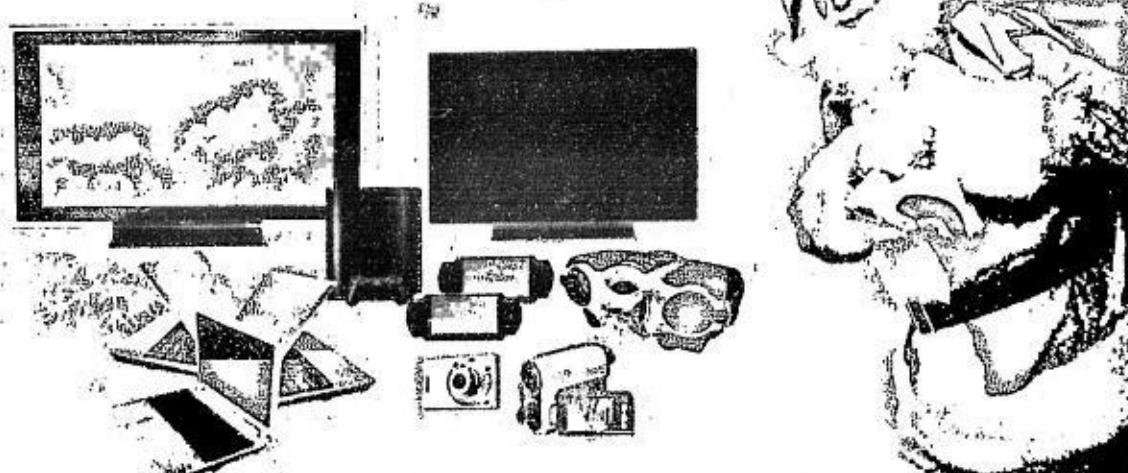
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Most fascinating interviews of 2007

LOS ANGELES—ANGELINA Jolie and Francis Ford Coppola are among those who made it to our annual list of most fascinating interviews.

These are the interviewees who did not bore us to tears; they are the folks we could talk to for hours and hours, without once looking at our watch or staring at the ceiling or the floor.

Francis Ford Coppola

"The Filipino people were generous and worked so hard with us. We will forever be affectionate toward them."

Those were the sentiments expressed by director Francis Ford Coppola when we asked him about making "Apocalypse Now" in the Philippines. "Salamat po!" he said to us twice.

It has been 32 years since one of cinema's greatest directors began filming his Vietnam War masterpiece in Laguna and other parts of the country. Hailed as a genius for his innovations in the landmark film—including the use of Wagner's

"The Ride of the Valkyries" in a scene involving attacking helicopters—Coppola won the Cannes' coveted Palme d'Or in 1979.

But the making of "Apocalypse" also took its personal and financial toll on the director. His wife, Eleanor, chronicled the debacles, including incidents that threatened their marriage, in the documentary, "Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse."

The director mortgaged his winery estate to finance the movie. While the film made some money, it took a while before Coppola regained his financial bearings.

In our interview, he volunteered how his daughter, Sofia, a child back then but now also a respected filmmaker, tried to stop folks from delivering foreclosure papers at the porch of their Napa Valley home in California, which she likened to Tara, Scarlet O'Hara's beloved estate in "Gone With the Wind."

Francis revealed, "...I couldn't even find

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ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Ruben V. Nepales

actors... to go to the Philippines to do the film. Ultimately, I had to finance the picture by putting up [on the block] the wine estate that would later make my fortune."

The list of actors who eventually went with Francis to the Philippines was impressive, even by today's standards: Marlon Brando, Martin Sheen, Robert Duvall, Dennis Hopper and some virtual unknowns then, like Harrison Ford and Laurence Fishburne (who was only 14 at the time—he lied about his age).

It was no surprise therefore that when the Oscar- and Golden Globe-winning director was asked which film personally affected him the most, he quickly replied, "Definitely, 'Apocalypse Now.' That was the most dramatic personal experience I ever had because I not only had all my money at risk, I was also making a film that was, artistically speaking, precarious. I was in new territory."

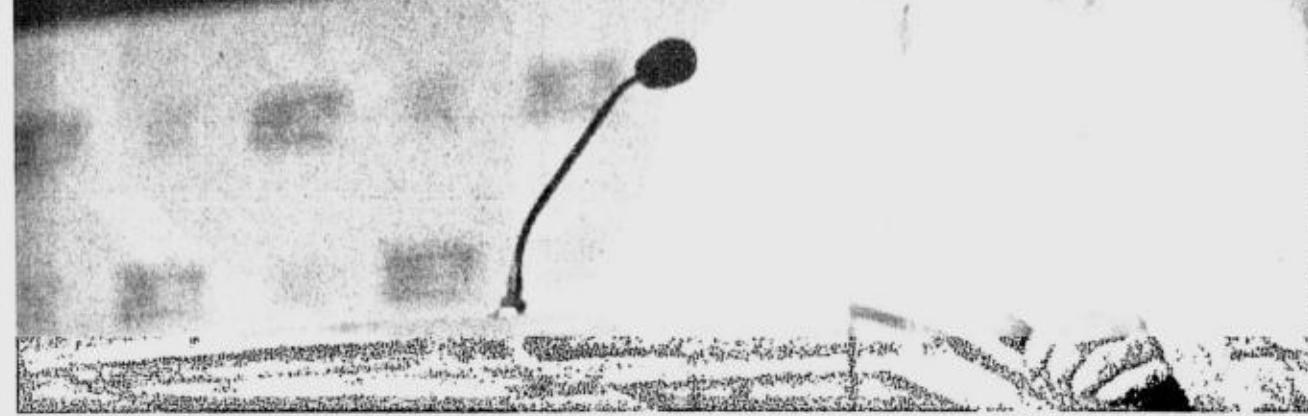
Javier Bardem
It was entrancing to hear Javier Bardem speak in our press con with him in Toronto. While Javier was blurting out words in English, a language he is learning to master, he was speaking from his Spanish heart and mind. His answers were passionate, sometimes surprising, and definitely not generic.

One of the few actors to win the Best Actor Award twice at the Venice Film Festival, Javier was quoted as saying about his English fluency in a different interview: "I'm getting more comfortable, but it will never get to the point as if you are doing it in your own language. When I say 'I love you' or 'I hate you' in Spanish, many things come to my mind, aspects of my own life. When I say it in English, I don't have the memories."

Of his violent character in the Coen brothers' acclaimed "No Country for Old Men," the Spaniard actor said, "For my own sake, thank God, the Coens created a nice, calm, peaceful and funny atmosphere. If the set was filled with tension, then I would have had a hard time because I don't particularly like killing people (laughter). One of the things that shocked me was how American culture involves so much familiarity with guns. On the set, almost everyone knew about the caliber of the guns, how

Ayala Malls Cinemas

These are the interviewees we could talk to for hours, without once looking at our watch or staring at the ceiling or the floor



QUENTIN Tarantino, the newest, proudest exponent of the barong, also champions Filipino films made in the '60s and '70s.

they work, their names. I was like, 'What the hell (laughter)?' Where I come from, we are not obsessed with guns."

Javier's character is merciless. He is the exact opposite: "I'm very good at forgiving. Not forgetting but forgiving. You can't forget because to forget is like putting a wall to the memory that is going to teach you how to overcome that situation. Forgiving is important. Like when I forgive you, I forgive the human race, my own human mistakes."

Angelina Jolie

Here's Hollywood's loveliest in face and spirit on aging: "Age is beautiful. My mother was beautiful. She was 58 when she passed away. I have a family who loves me as I am."

On whether she would like to be Angelina Jolie with Brad Pitt again, or a powerful, sexy woman when she is reborn, the actress said with a laugh, "Can't I be both? Honestly, I'd like to be a pilot and a painter."

The mother, movie star and political activist explained how she manages to wear different hats: "It involves proper scheduling. Obviously, my priorities are my children. They are growing up. I'll be doing even less work, because that's what I prefer to do. As for political activism, I've been educating myself on things that are happening around the world. It's a privilege to be able to do it. I feel motivated to say or do something because I'm in a position to do so."

But when asked to rank her priorities, Angelina answered, "I'm a mom first. I don't know if I'm as much an ambassador as I'm a citizen of the world. I just want to learn about the world and its cultures. Lastly, I'm an actress."

Quentin Tarantino

The newest, proudest exponent of the barong is an ardent, knowledgeable fan of Ciro H. Santiago, Eddie Romero and Gerry de Leon as well. Quentin's "Death Proof" features a scene where Rosario Dawson's makeup artist and stand-in character talks about an incident while filming in the Philippines—how she was at an outdoor rave while she was in the Philippines doing a movie called "Three Kicks to the Head, Part 3."

The writer-director told us his inspiration for that scene: "In my mind, they were doing a Ciro H. Santiago film in the Philippines, one of those straight-to-video action movies. Probably Don 'The Dragon' Wilson was the star of it. The story that Rosario's character was telling actually happened with Zoe and me in China when we were shooting 'Kill Bill.' We were at a rave at the Great Wall and the exact story happened. Zoe was trying to take a picture of me and she kept saying, 'Go back, go back, go back.' All of a sudden, I realized that I was on the edge of a precipice. I would have fallen into a gaping abyss had I taken one step back. If I listened to what Zoe said, I might not be here right now (laughter). She herself turned around and fell in the ditch. She fell on her feet and she was like, 'No worries.'"

Joaquin Phoenix

"I wonder which Joaquin Phoenix we're going to get?" A colleague mulled over which side of the brilliant but moody actor would be on display during our interview. We've seen the quiet, almost aloof Joaquin, but we've also had the animated, fun and joking Joaquin.

Fortunately, the latter showed up at our press con in New York. Joaquin laughed and answered with wit and candor when he was asked about being called "Wacko Phoenix" by Robert Duvall, who plays his estranged father in the crime thriller, "We Own the Night."

The Golden Globe Award winner for his portrayal of Johnny Cash in "Walk the Line" was a bundle of restless energy. He lit up a Camel cigarette, swung his arms, folded the table cloth and drew circles on it with his fingers, and scratched the back of his ear and his arm.

"I feel stupid talking about this stuff," he blurted at one point, when he was asked

about his "acting process." The actor, noted for his intense dark eyes, was reluctant to talk about acting, but when he did, his answers and insights were refreshing and non-generic. We think, though, that he beat Russell Crowe and Colin Farrell in the number of times he said the "F" word.

Joaquin was the first to downplay the he-was-Johnny-Cash reports: "I remember working on 'Walk the Line' and having a dream about Johnny Cash. Big f---g deal! You have been reading about Cash for two months and listening to his music. How do you not expect it to enter your subconscious while you sleep? I realize that it's not because I've become Johnny and now I'm feeling what he's feeling."

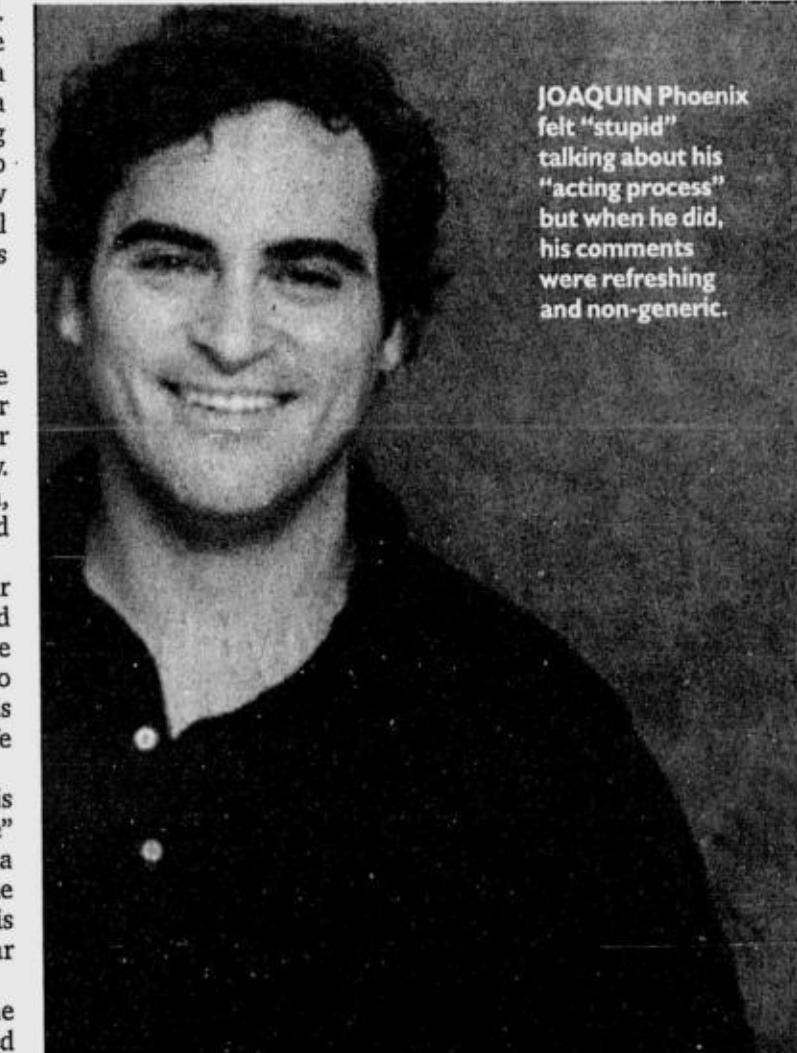
"I'm not sure who's responsible for the stories of me so obsessed with being Cash during the shoot," he continued. "It seems like it's a combination of the studios, the actors and journalists. They sort of conspire to give it some extra meaning... Whenever I'm asked about my acting process, I say it's more like an act of desperation. It's like asking somebody who has survived a 60-foot fall: 'What was his process for survival?' I don't know. I was upside down at one point (laughter)."

On being called "Wacko Phoenix" by Robert Duvall, he quipped, "It takes one to know one." He added, "This is the guy who talks to me about steak, lobster and tango before we do a serious scene. Then, he just hits it! There's nothing of that serious actor-getting-into-it bulls---! I have great admiration for Duvall. I don't think there's an actor who has seen his work who wasn't affected by his performance."

Joaquin disclosed his "process" to play a son at odds with Robert's cop character: "I wanted a reaction from Duvall from the very beginning. The reason I put an earring on my ear was that I was hoping he would look at me and think what a pathetic pussy I was (laughter). The moment Duvall saw that I had an earring, he walked right up and said, 'What the hell is this?' He started flapping my ear, going, 'What's this?' It was effective."

"He did actually swing at me once," the actor bared. "It was something I felt I needed. In no way was it meant to affect his performance. I'm not arrogant enough to think that I could do that!" (To be continued tomorrow, Saturday.)

E-mail the columnist at rvinpales_558@yahoo.com and read his blog, "The Nepales Report," on www.inquirerbloggers.net/nepalesreport.



JOAQUIN Phoenix
felt "stupid"
talking about his
"acting process"
but when he did,
his comments
were refreshing
and non-generic.

ENTERTAINMENT



"Anino" by Raymond Red



"Kultado" by Lawrence Fajardo



"Batang Trapo" by Mes de Guzman

French fest to show short films from RP

NINE FILIPINO SHORT FILMS will be shown in the Asian Panorama section of the 30th Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival in France, Feb. 1-9, 2008.

Clermont-Ferrand is regarded as "the Cannes of short film festivals."

Other participating countries from the region are Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

The Filipino short films are: Raymond Red's "Anino," Mes de Guzman's "Batang Trapo," Cesar Hernando's "Kagat ng Dilim," Tad Ermitaño's "Local Unit," Lawrence Fajardo's "Kultado," Mark V. Reyes' "Last Full Show," Jeck Cogama's "Putot," John Torres' "Salat" and Khavn de la Cruz's "Rugby Boyz."

"Anino" is about a commercial photographer whose camera is stolen by a street urchin. It stars Ronnie Lazaro, John Arcilla and Eddie Garcia. It is the first Filipino film to win the prestigious Palme d'Or (Golden Palm, for short films) award at the Cannes International Film Festival in 2000. Red has made



"Kagat ng Dilim" by Cesar Hernando

other short films that have been exhibited and praised in many screenings in Europe, Asia and America.

"Batang Trapo" is about two siblings who sell rags to vehicle drivers. It won the L'Etoile d'Or at the Marrakech Film Festival in 2002. De Guzman has won Palanca awards for Literature and made "Ang Daan Patungong Kalimutong," a full-length film that recently won Best Picture at the Cine de Los Pueblos del Sur in Venezuela.

"Kagat ng Dilim" is based on a true account about a group of

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KATAS NG SAUDI G 1:30, 3:40, 5:50, 8:00, 10:10	BAHAY KUBO G 11:50, 2:30, 5:10, 7:50, 10:30	SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 9 G 11:40, 2:20, 5:00, 7:40, 10:20
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3 PROMENADE GREENHILLS ...a destination for all! NOW SHOWING	4 BAHAY KUBO 11:40, 2:25, 5:10 7:55, 10:35 GP	5 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO PG13 11:00, 1:40, 4:20 7:00, 9:40 PG13
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2 KATAS NG SAUDI MTRCB GP 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00	4 ENTENG KABISOTE 4 MTRCB GP 11:50, 2:15, 4:40, 7:05, 9:30
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4 ENTENG KABISOTE - 4	12 ENTENG KABISOTE - 4	2 ENTENG KABISOTE - 4
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3 SAKAL, SAKALI, SAKLOLO	16 RESIKLO	2 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL - 9
2 ENTENG KABISOTE - 4	17 KATAS NG SAUDI	3 RESIKLO
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1 ENTENG KABISOTE - 4	18 Lianas Cinema (Calamba) Tel. (049) 545.7202	4 ENTENG KABISOTE - 4
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2 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL - 9	23 BAHAY KUBO	4 ENTENG KABISOTE - 4
3 ENTENG KABISOTE - 4	24 KATAS NG SAUDI	5 ENTENG KABISOTE - 4
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2 ENTENG KABISOTE - 4	31 ENTENG KABISOTE - 4	2 ENTENG KABISOTE - 4
3 SAKAL, SAKALI, SAKLOLO	32 RESIKLO	3 SAKAL, SAKALI, SAKLOLO
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3 ENTENG KABISOTE 4 12:55, 3:20, 5:45, 8:10,



FANS can't keep their hands off the "Sakal" stuffed toys. EDWIN BACASMAS



FROM left: Actors Alfred Vargas and Paolo Paraiso, producer Ina Alegre and rock icon Joey Smith on the "Banal" float. EDWIN BACASMAS



BEST Float winner "Resiklo" hews closely to the movie's post-apocalyptic, recycled robots theme. RUDY ESPERAS

Float, sink or swim

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

IT WAS HIS FIRST METRO Manila Film Festival parade—and though Rey Bayona was portraying someone who's supposedly beyond entertaining such temporal thoughts, he was visibly excited.

Bayona, nephew of Comedy King Dolphy, was hired to play the Pope for the float of "Banal"—one of nine entries in the annual fest. (The action-drama features a Papal assassination attempt as climax.)

Bigest role



STAR-STRUCK Pinoys gather at the SM Mall of Asia complex, where the annual MMFF parade is kicked off. RUDY ESPERAS

Bayona has done bit parts in his uncle's comedies, like "Bugoy Goes to Congress." But his Pope on Christmas Eve is his biggest role so far.

It was also the first MMFF parade for "Banal" co-star and rock icon Joey "Pepe" Smith, who was just as enthusiastic as Bayona. Smith told INQUIRER Entertainment that the parade capped "a productive year for me."

The other "Banal" actors—Christopher de Leon, Alfred Vargas and Paolo Contis—came in SWAT gear.

Red T-shirt

Vic Sotto on the "Enteng Kabisote 4" float was simply clad in red T-shirt. The "Resiklo"

Highs and lows at the annual festival parade

REY Bayona as a fictional Pope, center, shares the float with a real-life SWAT team. RUDY ESPERAS



cast, led by Sen. Bong Revilla, donned post-apocalyptic gear.

"Resiklo" romped away with the Best Float citation and the P500,000 cash prize.

Imus producer Andrea Bautista-Ynares expressed pride in the "Resiklo" victory, unmindful of the fact that it cost her film outfit exactly as much as the cash prize.

At least, second placer "Sakal, Saklolo," which sported a toy land theme, posted a little profit. Promo head Roxy Liquigan said Star Cinema had spent P250,000 for the float. Cash prize was P300,000.

Some fans couldn't keep their hands off the "Sakal" float—filching the stuffed toys hanging from the sides.

"Bahay Kubo" was earlier earmarked for Best Float. Alas, lead stars Maricel Soriano and Eric Quizon were absent, cost-

ing it valuable points in the judging, recounted Ric Camaligan, parade committee chair.

Camaligan said Soriano and Quizon were in the United States.

Pacman absent

Lily Monteverde, "Bahay" producer, didn't mind sliding down to third place in the float competition. "Our float is simple, but very Filipino. It cost about P250,000." Prize was P100,000.

Another no-show was Manny Pacquiao, star of "Anak ng Kumander." The official excuse from Pacman's camp was that the boxer was training in Cebu.

The grapevine is rife with rumors, however, that he's squabbling with wife Jinkee.

In Pacquiao's stead, impersonator Manly Paksiw kept co-star Ara Mina company on the "Kumander" float.

Katie Holmes: I haven't changed; I'm really happy

By the INQUIRER and INQUIRER.net Entertainment Staff

AN ASSOCIATED PRESS REPORT has Katie Holmes saying she hasn't changed since marrying Tom Cruise: "With everything that's happened, I still feel the same," she tells Parade magazine in its Dec. 23 issue. "I'm really happy being a mom, being a wife." (Somehow, this intrigues more than it reassures.)



MICHELLE Rodriguez REUTERS

Lost, jailed

LOS ANGELES—Actress Michelle Rodriguez began a 180-day jail term here last weekend for probation violation, the second Hollywood star after Kiefer Sutherland to face a Christmas incarceration. The former "Lost" star checked in to Century Regional Detention Facility in Lynwood, south of downtown LA, under her given name, Mayte. Reuters

Top of the talk shows

For those who missed the weekend show biz gabfests last weekend. (And why we are moved, if we are moved.

• Jennylyn Mercado, on rumors she lay down on a street in despair over a lovers' spat with Patrick Garcia:

"Oh my God, ang cheap! Sino ang nagsabi noon? (Actually, we've heard worse.)

• Marian Rivera, on reports she has a secret boyfriend, a varsity baseball player in a prestigious school:

"Lagi naman qkong in love. Masaya... lahat ng parte ng buhay ko." (That's not an answer.)

• Dennis Trillo, on mending ties with former girlfriend Carlene Aguilar this Christmas:

"Pasko naman, eh. Sana wala munang galit. Hindi naman agad-agad mawawala yun." (This gives new meaning to "wifey-washy.")

• Ara Mina, on reports sister Cristine Reyes has reconciled with Dennis Trillo: "Bahala na siya. Malaki na siya." (Korek. Di mo nakita yan last month?)

• Cristine, asked if she has moved on after the controversy surrounding her alleged relationship with Dennis:

"Anong move on? Wala naman ipagkamove on doon, eh." (Move on, you know—the opposite of stuck.)

• Jewel Mische on Richard Gutierrez:

"I really want to thank Richard. He was my knight in shining armor." (Bakit past tense na?)

• Richard on Jewel:

"Si Jewel, she's very sweet so she's not hard to get along with. Lumalabas kami." (Hmm, mukhang may Valentine movie



HOLLYWOOD A-lister Tom Cruise, right, with wife Katie Holmes, posing for photographers on the red carpet prior to the Bambi media award ceremony in Duesseldorf, western Germany, in November.

up her career for someone she loves:

"That would be a big mistake. Kung may [nangyaring di maganda dahil] sa desisyon na yon, sistihin mo pa yung tao."

Quote of the week

Dranreb Belleza, on coming home after suffering from lymphoma:

"It was important for me to come home... to just embrace [people I wanted to be with], to let them know it's okay, [they should] not be afraid. I'm not."

(Sources: Startalk, The Buzz and Showbiz Central)



LUXURY jeweler Van Cleef and Arpels is suing model/TV star Heidi Klum for allegedly copying a vintage jewelry design.

REUTERS

Suspense, murder, mystery as Hallmark, MGM start new year

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HALLMARK CHANNEL KICKS OFF 2008 with must-see premieres of suspense, murder and mystery movies.

In "Absolution" on Jan. 6, 4 p.m., New York City journalist Bettina (Samantha Mathis) is



"ABSOLUTION"

sent back to her hometown to investigate the story of Paco Ramirez, a comatose man who claims responsibility for a series of medical miracles.

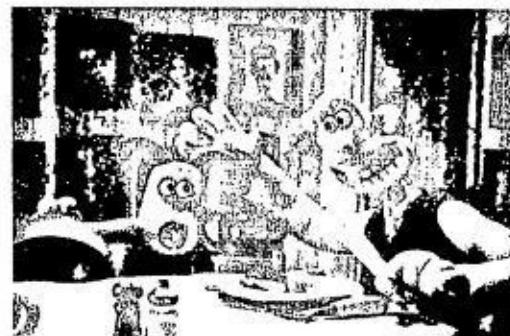
Her lack of faith and stubborn refusal to believe prods her to prove that the miracles are a hoax.

On Jan. 11 at 11 p.m., "Break In" features newlyweds Cameron (Todd Babcock) and Marla (Kelly Carlson) whose honeymoon takes a turn for the worst when three intruders break into the luxury villa, holding the couple in captivity.

On top of that, an approaching hurricane leaves them stranded in the island with their captors.

Animation films

Wallace and his loyal dog race to prevent a



"WALLACE & Gromit"

monstrous herbivore from chomping down on the town's vegetable harvest before their annual vegetable competition in HBO's "Wallace & Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit" at 11 a.m. and 11 p.m. today.

On Dec. 31 at 1 p.m., "Over The Hedge" stars Bruce Willis, Steve Carell and Avril Lavigne who lend their voices to adorable woodland creatures.

When a bunch of forest animals awake from hibernation to find their natural habitat altered and cut off by a tall hedge, a raccoon named RJ hatches a plan to lead the starving animals over the hedge to gather food from their new human neighbors' garbage cans.

'Gorky Park'

In "Gorky Park," airing on MGM Channel Jan. 19, 9 p.m., three mutilated bodies are found in Moscow's Gorky Park. It's up to Russian police officer Arkady Renko to find the maniacal killer.

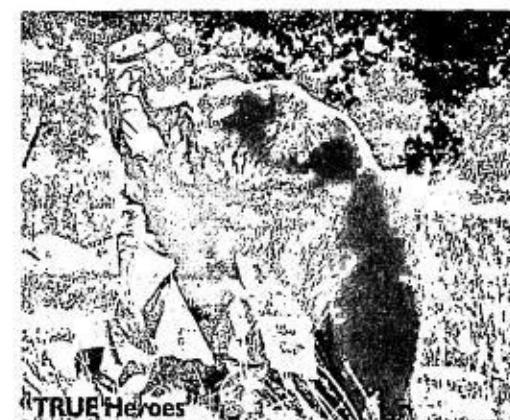


WILLIAM Hurt

From the best-selling mystery novel by Martin Cruz Smith, the movie stars Michael Apted directs.

Tales of bravery

In January, Discovery Channel's new docu-drama series "True Heroes" showcases the in-



"TRUE Heroes"

credible courage of people who act in life-threatening situations.

Featuring dramatic reenactments and expert analyses, it looks at the situations from both the heroes' and the experts' points of view.

The series, which airs Mondays starting Jan. 7, 11 p.m., features the episodes "Inferno," "Shark Bait," "Gas Station," "Skydiver," "Submerged Car," "Paraglider," "Blind Canoeist," "Heroine House Fire," "Runaway Car," "Bear Attack," "Thin Ice" and "Death Boat."

LIVING Stars

E-mail: entertainment@inquirer.com.ph


NATALIE GRACE LAUCHENGCO

ACCORDING TO PROUD DAD Raymond Lauchengco: "She's now 2 months old. Quite fittingly, Natalie means 'child of Christmas.' We spent Christmas Eve with my wife Mia's *lola* Carmen. There were lots of food and the entire clan gathered to exchange gifts and stories. After dinner, we had hot chocolate and *ensaymada* with ham and *queso de bola*. Natalie is the first great-grandchild of her *abuelita* Carmen, so you can imagine how they fussed over her. She was a little cranky, but she willingly wore a Santa cap for her entrance. We spent Christmas Day with my sister Menchu; she makes a mean turkey roast! It's great because my dad, back from the US, is spending the holidays with us. Natalie loves music. This year, 'The First Noel' and 'Angels We Have Heard on High' are her favorites. She also loves Broadway, pop, standards—like Norah Jones' version of 'The Nearness of You' and Hiroshima's 'Thousand Cranes.' Among my songs (from the album 'Full Circle'), 'Head Over Heels' has become her favorite lullaby. I just hope it doesn't have the same effect on other listeners!"

Bayani San Diego Jr.

STAR BABY

FAVORITE NOOKS
VICKY MORALES

OUR TREE WAS GIVEN TO me by my mother-in-law, Yoly Reyno a few Christmases ago. I got the mini-stuffed toys from S&R Pricesmart and Gourdo's, but I made the yarn-covered balls from scratch—an idea I got from a Gap store I had visited. I bought the Styrofoam balls in three different sizes and the yarn in assorted colors from National Bookstore. I spun yarn around each ball and accented them with checkered ribbons. They turned out to be very pretty. This year, I wanted a kiddie tree because I'm expecting twin boys in a couple of months. Since "Saksi" (the GMA 7 late-night newscast that she anchors) goes on live even during the holidays, I rush to the studio between family gatherings. This Christmas is special to me and my husband King (with her at right) because, with the arrival of the twins, I feel like we'll be celebrating another Christmas very soon. Both our families have been praying for this. It's like our prayers have been answered—twice over.

Bayani San Diego Jr.

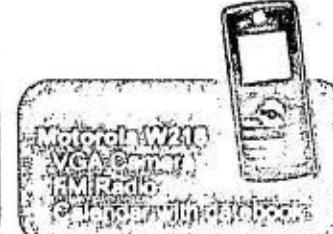
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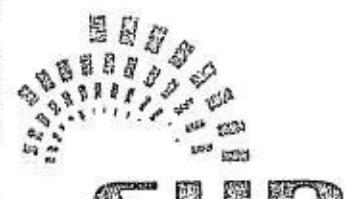
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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2007

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

LIVING STARS

AUSTRALIAN
actors Cate
Blanchett, left, and
Hugo Weaving at the
premiere of
"Blackbird," Dec.
20, at the Sydney
Theatre Company.
It was Blanchett's
directorial debut for
a full-length
production.

REUTERS

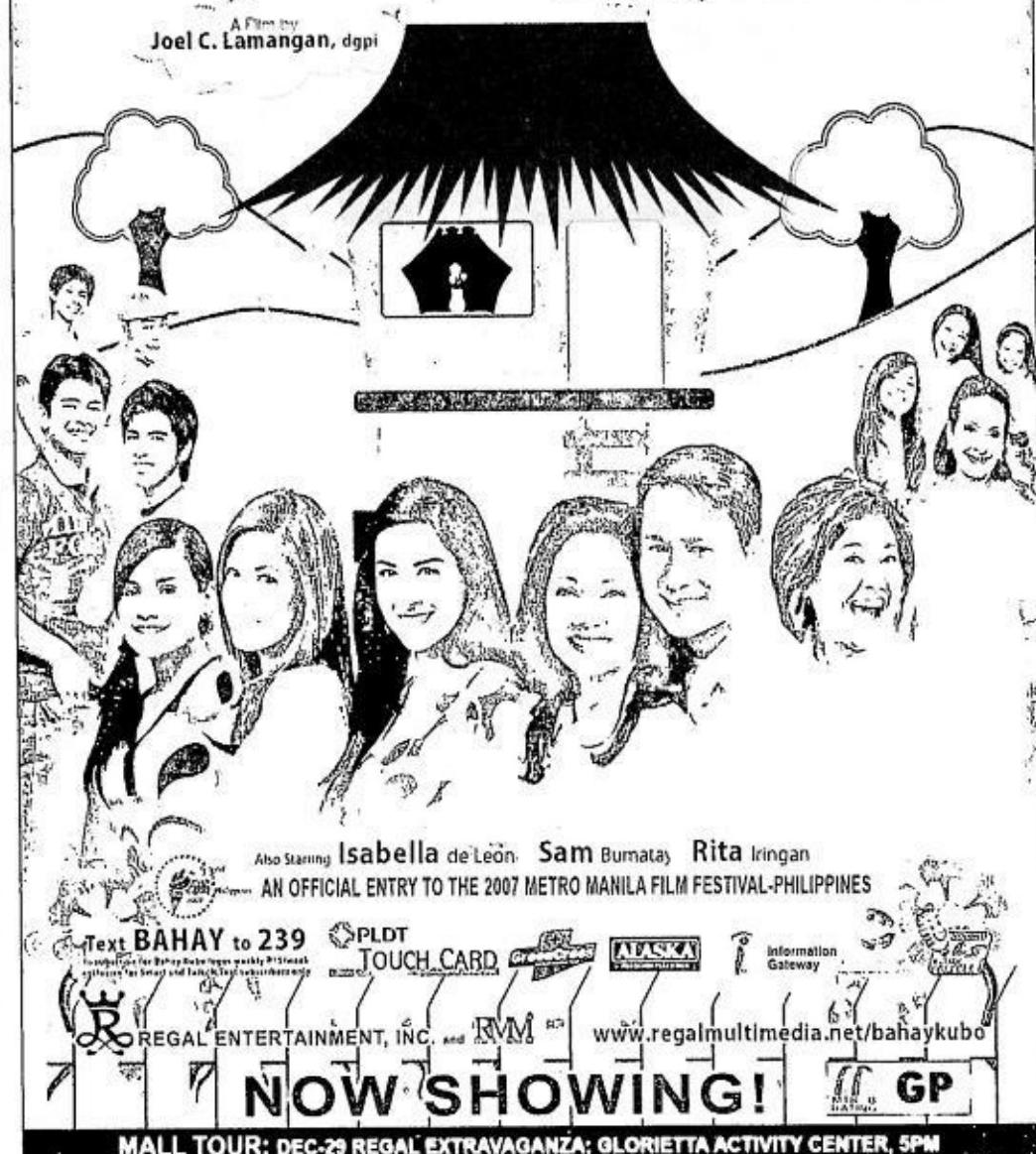
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Maricel Soriano Eric Quizon
Marian Rivera Shaina Magdayao Yasmien Kudi Eugene and Ms. Gloria Romero
Mark Herras Rayver Cruz Jiro Manio Bearwin Melly

Bahay Kubo A Pinoy Mano Po!

A Film by
Joel C. Lamangan, dgpi



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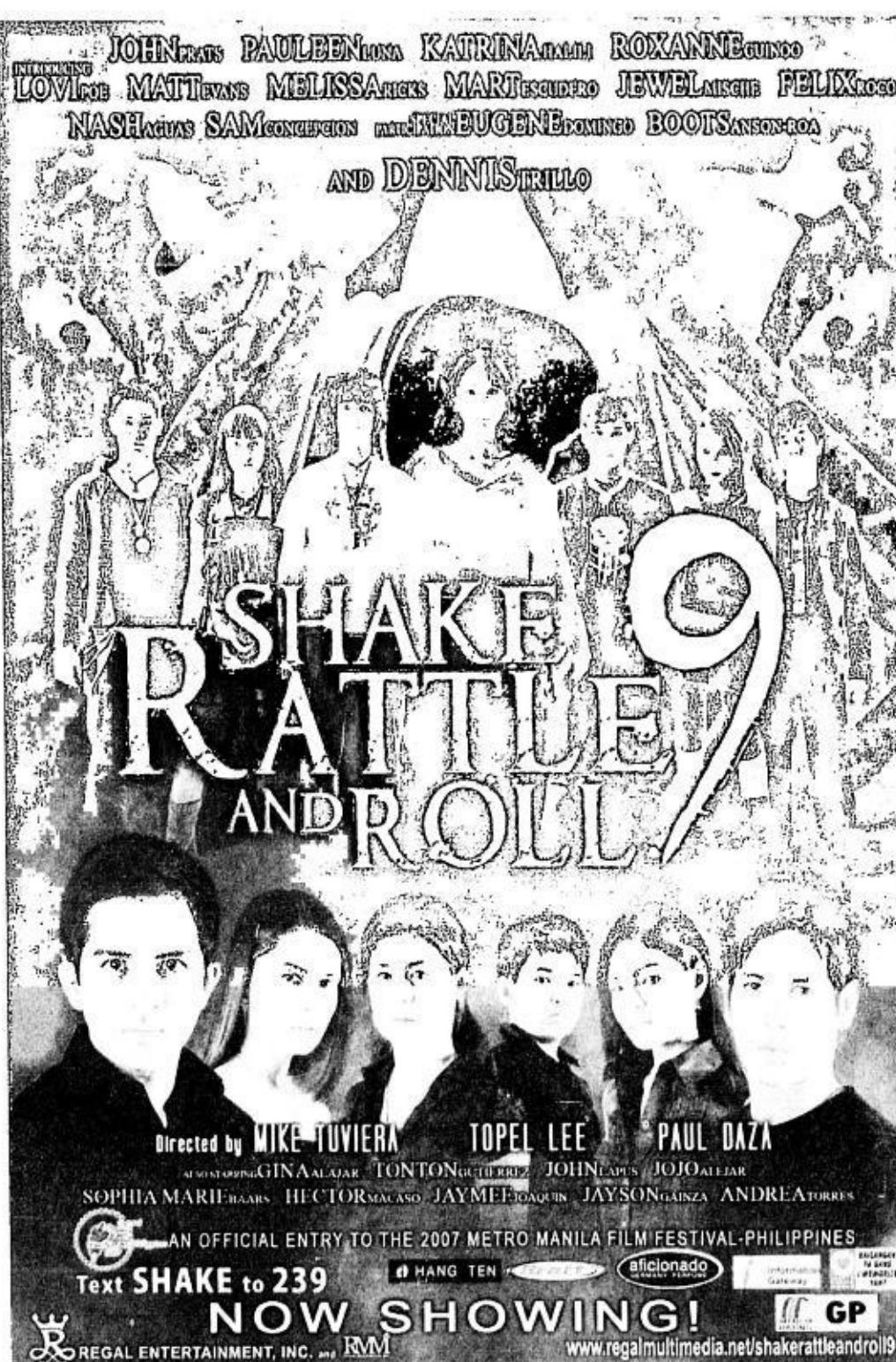
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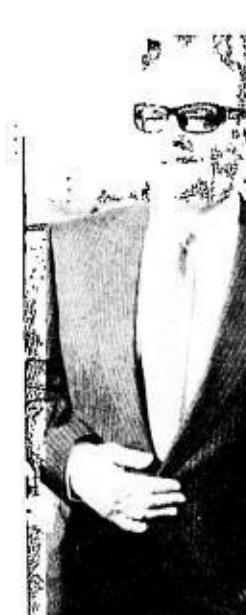
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MALL TOUR: DEC-29 REGAL EXTRAVAGANZA; GLORIETTA ACTIVITY CENTER, 5PM

HILARY Swank at the premiere of "PS I Love You" in Dublin, Dec. 19. AFP



WILL Smith at the London premiere of his latest film, "I am Legend," Dec. 19. AFP



JACK Nicholson at the 'The Bucket List' Hollywood premiere, Dec. 16. AFP

STARS
FOR
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ACTORS Jennifer Love Hewitt and Ross McCall, top, and Michael Rapaport and his son, above, serve Christmas meals to the homeless at the LA Mission in downtown Los Angeles, California.

AFP

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A visit before the breakup

**OUT
OF THE
CLOSET**

By Marinel R. Cruz
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

RACHELLE ANN GO'S PASIG City home may not be the best place to nurse her broken heart. The two-story house is filled with reminders of her ex-boyfriend Christian Bautista.

Rachelle Ann and Christian recently made public the end of their yearlong relationship. The singers said the split-up was a "mutual" decision, and denied that a "third-party" was involved.

When Living Stars visited Rachelle Ann, just days before the announcement, the bubbly singer gamely showed us some of her favorite things, especially those given by Christian.

There was no indication, whatsoever, of the sad news about to come.

From over a hundred bags, Rachel Ann plucked a piece from Burberry that a group of US-based fans gave her last April. "This is special to me," she explained, "because they also gifted Christian with matching Burberry belt and tie."

From her perfume collection, she brought out a bottle of Elizabeth Arden

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Rachelle Ann Go's home is filled with reminders of her ex-boyfriend, Christian Bautista.

SHE HAD to train herself to wear high-heels, a job requirement.

JEWELRY

Christian gave me a pair of two-toned earrings when he came back from a trip in Indonesia. He also gave me a necklace to go with it.

This Swarovski studded bangle is also from Christian. I asked him to buy accessories for my cell phone and he gave me this. I liked it so much, that I decided not to make a cell phone ornament out of it anymore.

I got these three-piece Louis Vuitton earrings from Hong Kong. You can mix and match the individual pieces. It has a heart, a flower and a star.

This diamond crucifix is the first pendant I ever bought from my earnings. The "R" pendant was from my manager, Veronique del Rosario, her gift for my 18th birthday.

For my birthday this year, I bought myself a set of diamond necklace, earrings and gold ring.

SCENTS

I have all sorts of perfumes—most of them gifts from people close to me. Aside from Elizabeth Arden's Green Tea, I also like the fresh scent of Light Blue by Dolce and Gabbana.

The scent of Florentina is really strong. With just a spray, people can smell you from afar. It's something I wear during

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UR PE FR HAS NO NAME. WE TALKED about getting a name for our fish, right? I got it for P500. In operation, Long East Avenue three years ago. It eats the little goldfish that we put in the aquarium with it. I guess it's not hungry now because

it's ignoring the guppies. My interior designer and I plan to build a bigger aquarium, on, in the foyer for it. This one under the sofa is just temporary.

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THE SINGER has been collecting drumsticks since 2004.

Green Tea. "This is from Christian," she said. "I've finished four bottles. I love its fresh scent."

For her birthday last August, Rachelle Ann got a Louis Vuitton bag, also from Christian. "This is the latest addition to my collection. Christian bought it in Milan. I like its style ... and I can put a lot of stuff in it," she said.



THE SET of two-toned earrings and necklace was a gift from ex-boyfriend Christian. The diamond pieces are her birthday gifts to herself.

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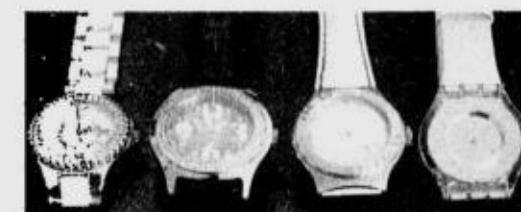
BAGS

I think I have more than a hundred bags in the storage. I don't get to use all of them. This Elvis bag was a gift from Kuya Carlo (Orosa, singer, and Christian's talent manager). We bought this in the United States when we went there for a show. This costs almost \$200 in the mall, but the stalls in Beverly Hills sell it for just \$80. Luckily, one of the salesladies in Beverly Hills is Pinay, so we even got a 50 percent discount.

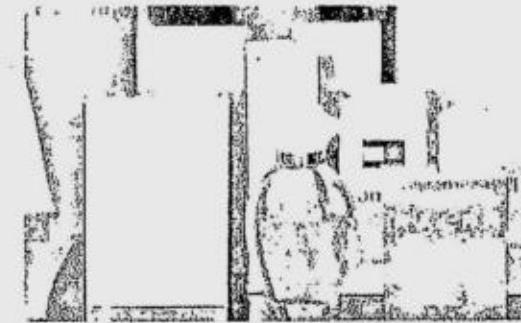
I hardly use my Prada and Coach bags because they're small. They're just big enough for my cell phone and wallet. These are gifts from friends, too.



SHE LIKES dresses designed by Veejay Floresca and Njork.



SHE BECAME conscious of time only when she began singing professionally, she says.



SHE HAS "all sorts of perfumes," Rachelle Ann says.

I personally wouldn't spend too much on branded bags. But the advantage of owning expensive ones is that they're really sturdy. You can use them for a long time.

This make-up bag from Mac was also a gift. I don't bring it on long trips because it's really heavy. I use my Juicy Couture make-up bag because it's light and compact.

SHOES

My latest is this Vince Camuto pair that I bought in Hong Kong. Futuristic ang look n'ya. It's very different from the pairs you see here.

I like pairs that are unique. But comfort is still my priority. If they're cute but pinch my feet, I don't buy it.

From my recent trip to Canada, I bought this pair of beaded heels. I got lots of rave reviews for this.

I own pumps in red, bronze and black. They are perfect for shows that require quick changes.

ACCESSORIES

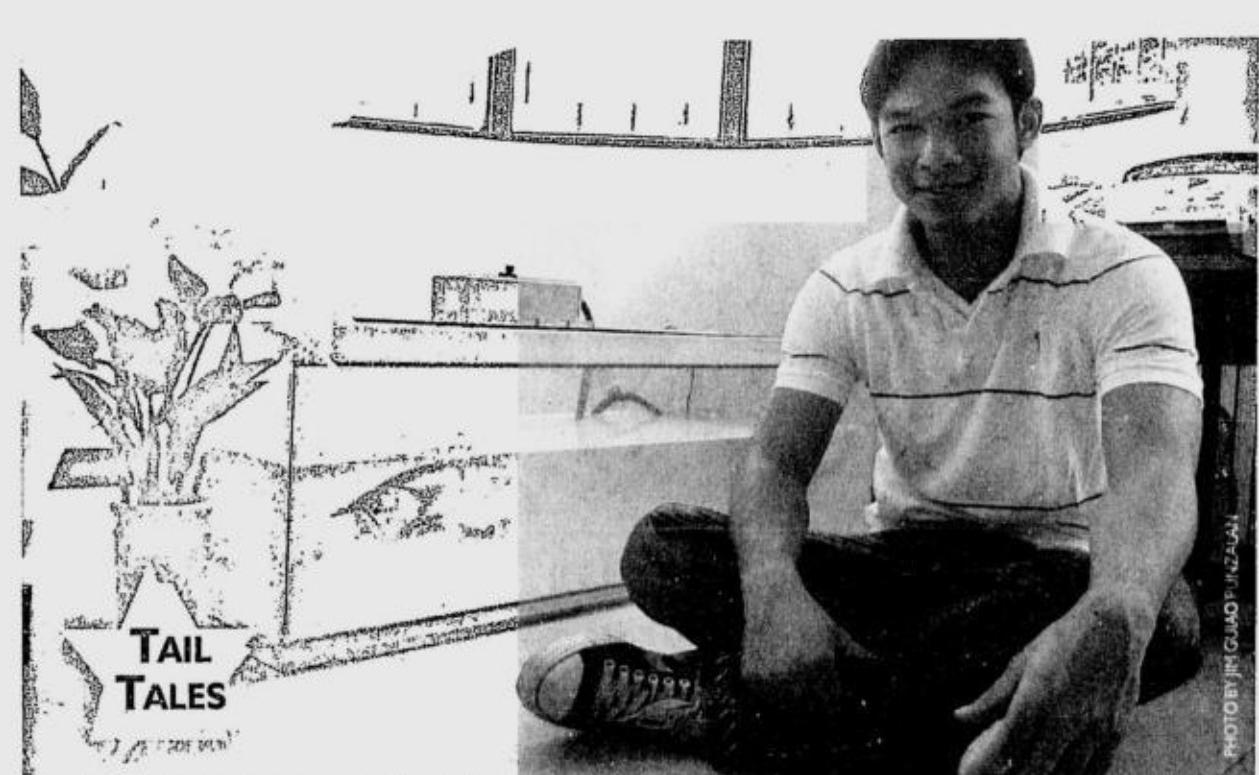
I did not like wearing watches before. It was only when I began singing professionally that I became conscious of time. It's important to always be punctual. Skechers provide most of my watches. Christian also gave me a couple of pieces. From those that he gave me, I like the one with fancy straps.

GOWNS, DRESSES

The gold terno I wore for a competition in Kazakhstan in 2005 was by Nono Palmas. Kabisado na n'ya ang taste ko. One of the pieces he made for me for my debut was a pink gown with Swarovski beads and hand-painted butterfly design. I also like vintage dresses from Njork and creations by Veejay Floresca—very detailed.

JEANS

I enjoy wearing jeans more than dresses. I have a total of 60 pairs! My favorite is the one I bought in Dubai a long time ago. It's super rugged and stretchable.



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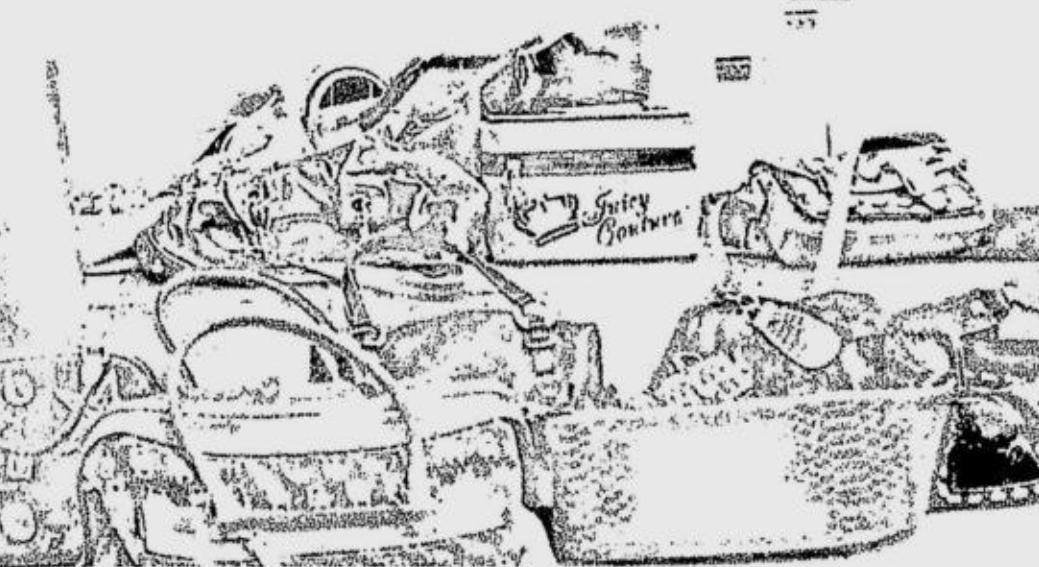
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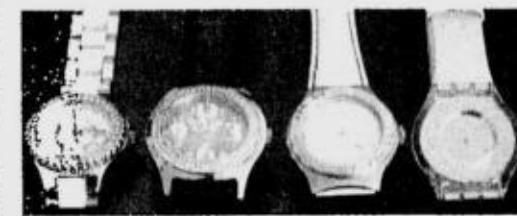
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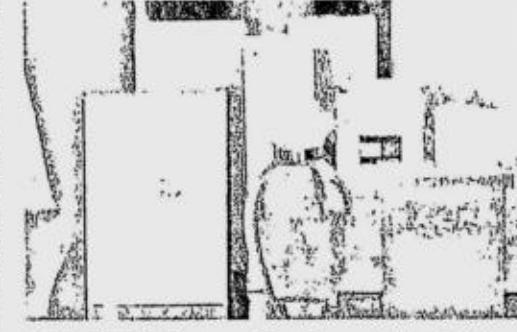
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